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ABSTRACT

The school-community process is a system that brings citizens and educators together to help solve school problems and plan educational improvement. This handbook describes that process and how it can foster a three-way partnership among local, regional, and state education agencies. Some of the topics covered include planning for change, selecting and guiding a process facilitator, sharing information among project participants, making use of recent research, and expanding and evaluating a project. A case study of a school district's project is examined along with background information supplied by individual authors on the following subjects: the school-community process at the local, state, and regional levels; alternative ways to organize a project; and estimated costs. Also included is a ready-to-use questionnaire measuring public involvement in educational decision-making and related agency support. (Author/LD)

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BUILDING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

EA 012 026

AN INFORMATION PACKET FOR EDUCATION AGENCIES

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BUILDING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
An Information Packet for Education Agencies

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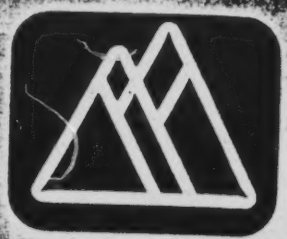

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Introduction

In growing numbers, people are actively looking for ways to improve schools and to get involved in making the decisions that shape school changes.

For the past eight years, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has worked on developing an approach that brings citizens and educators together to solve school problems and plan educational improvement. The approach is called the School-Community Process. Since 1968, several communities in Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Utah have used this process to start a kindergarten, improve vocational offerings, create an adult education program and construct two new schools.

The School-Community Process also fosters a three-way partnership among local, regional and state education agencies, each with an essential role.

At the local level a representative school-community group, made up of citizens, educators, and students, work cooperatively with the school staff and board in planning and implementing needed educational improvements.

The efforts are reinforced by the regional education agency which provides the services of process facilitators to assist local groups in their planning and implementation activities.

State agencies, such as state departments of education or colleges, add to the total effort by providing training for process facilitators and support for local district change.

A series of papers have been prepared especially for state and regional education agency staff. These papers provide background information about the process and describe ways in which state and regional agencies can initiate and support the process. An annotated list of the papers in two groups follows.

FINDING OUT MORE ABOUT THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS

These papers provide background information about the School-Community Process. Experienced consultants are available from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to help agencies further explore the process and to plan a tailor-made program.

MAKING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS WORK
By Janice Druian

Describes how the School-Community Process works at the local level.

BUILDING THE CASE FOR A SUPPORT NETWORK
By Robert G. Green

Describes what state and regional education agencies can do to support the School-Community Process.

ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO ORGANIZE A SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROJECT
By Diane Jones

Illustrates three ways in which the major elements of the School-Community Process have been organized for particular projects.

ESTIMATED COSTS FOR PROJECT ELEMENTS
By Diane Jones

Indicates a range of costs for each project element; state, regional and local agencies select which elements to include in a project and may share the costs.

BUILDING A SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP: WHAT HAPPENED IN SAN JUAN
By Carleen Matthews and Diane Jones

Highlights how a school district in southeastern Utah and the state education agency became involved in and implemented a school-community project.

CITIZENS AND EDUCATORS WORKING TOGETHER: WHERE DO YOU STAND?
By Diane Jones

A self-administered survey with questions that focus on notions about public involvement in educational decision making and related agency support.

USING THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS

The following papers provide information for planning and implementing agency activities that support the School-Community Process. The papers are designed to be used in conjunction with consultant and training services provided by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

AN APPROACH TO PLANNING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY SERVICES
By Carolyn Hunter

Addresses the preliminary planning that occurs after a school-community project has been generated but before resources for implementation have been allocated.

SELECTING A PROCESS FACILITATOR
By Diane Jones

Provides a brief description of the role of a process facilitator and qualifications to consider when hiring a process facilitator.

SUPPORTING AND GUIDING PROCESS FACILITATORS
By Diane Jones

Discusses ways an agency staff member can help process facilitators plan and carry out their work.

SHARING INFORMATION
By Carleen Matthews

Examines why, when, and how to share information among participants in a school-community project.

FACTORS OF SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION
By Carleen Matthews

Presents some implications of recent research with regard to introducing and sustaining innovations.

PROJECT CONTINUATION
By Carleen Matthews

Describes some of the important factors that affect whether or not an innovation continues or is expanded.

EVALUATION: QUESTIONS FOR CONTINUOUS PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT
By Diane Jones

Presents sample questions that can be used as a basis of evaluating a school-community project.

Project Continuation

In an educational service district office, we overheard a conversation between the coordinator of the School-Community Process and a consultant from the Rural Education Program.

"I am worried about our process facilitators," the coordinator said. "They are working overtime--during the day they plan and train, and during evenings they facilitate their school-community groups."

"I know! The school-community groups are beginning their needs assessment, and that's a heavy time in the process."

"Now our agency wants them to facilitate community goals-planning workshops in all the districts in our region."

"How do you assess the problem?" asked the consultant.

"On the one hand, I don't want them spread too thin," replied the coordinator. "But then again, I want this project to expand next year into other school districts. We're on a biennial budget, and right now the agency is deciding whether to fund all the process facilitators in the next round."

"So you feel a double bind? If they accept the requests to do these new workshops, they may not be able to keep up with their present work. But if they refuse, then other districts may not see how the School-Community Process can benefit them."

"Exactly! And this agency may not plan for the bucks to carry this work on in the future."

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As the School-Community Process gets underway, the coordinator and process facilitators may find themselves facing conflict between the demands of current work and the call of future prospects. Conflicts between the needs of the project and future services of the larger agency of which it is a part must be acknowledged and steps taken to work them out. The long-term continuation of the School-Community Process is then more likely.

Project continuation, i.e., the survival and expansion of a project's operations and influence, is difficult amid funding uncertainties, spiraling inflation, and changing educational priorities. Some people consider a project "continued" when the sponsoring agency decides to carry on with the original goals and treatment. However, field experience of the Rural Education Program and the findings of educational research lead us to believe that project continuation is not always such a straightforward matter, nor does it always result from formal agency decisions.

Rather than simply a yes or no decision to continue supporting the School-Community Process with agency funds, we've found that project continuation occurs when portions of the process become part of the ongoing activities of an agency. This happens best when the project and the sponsoring agency mutually influence each other and become interdependent.

This interdependence between project and sponsoring agency has been a vital concern to the Rural Education Program. As we've looked at our successes and failures in the field, we have found that some factors kept recurring and were noticeably present in School-Community Process projects that continued. In projects where these factors were weak or lacking, there was difficulty in achieving continuation.

We've treated these factors as "principles of interdependence," and five of them which seem especially important are ownership, skill training, recognition of the uniqueness of each situation, representative participation, and neutrality.[1]

Ownership

The principle which seems to be most vital for successful involvement of an agency in a School-Community Process project, and therefore important for project continuation, is that of ownership. As activities of the School-Community Process unfold, people in the agency begin to see many project practices that help them do their work better. Seeing the project in this light, they begin to invest energy and commitment in maintaining it. For the coordinator and others directly involved, this phenomenon means that they no longer control the project and its practices: the program now belongs to all the people who affect it or are affected by it.

> *In a training session, a project coordinator and two process facilitators were worried about the way the school-community group (SCG) decided to respond to their needs assessment data. Some survey returns indicated that community citizens were interested in having more vocational courses offered in school. A relatively equal number of survey returns indicated that citizens wanted a new playground for an elementary school.*

The coordinator and a process facilitator felt that expanding the school curriculum to add vocational courses would fit nicely with a recent curriculum priority set by the regional education agency. However, the second process facilitator reminded the team that no pressure of intervention should interfere with the school-community group's choices. Without the SCG owning their choice there would be less likelihood that they would support the project.

Skill Training

The second principle which seems tied to the continuation of a project is closely related to the first. It holds that members of the participating organizations need orientation, sometimes even training, to understand and participate in project practices. Orientation and training are most successful when they show how project practices relate to their ongoing work. The consultant or project member who provides orientation and training to personnel needs several skills, including: awareness of sound problem-solving processes, well-developed communication skills, training and consultation skills which are practical and subtle in nature, and visible leadership.

One agency found that its curriculum specialists who normally offered technical assistance to local school districts, were unfamiliar with the role, functions, and unique processes of school-community groups. Brief training sessions oriented the specialists to the nature of the School-Community Process, described the unique requests for technical assistance that might come from local school-community groups, and offered practice in the consulting skills that best facilitate school-community group work. As a result of using these specialists, trained in this way, the local school-community group was more satisfied with their own final report to the school board.

Uniqueness of Each Situation

The third principle which seems to support project continuation is that the uniqueness of each situation must be acknowledged. This point seems self-evident, but its ramifications are not. Each agency, project, and person is a unique combination of resources, needs, awarenesses, and limitations, and only the people in the situation itself know what the combination is. When site organization people first hear about the new project, they often express something like: "That sounds like a good idea, but I don't think it will work here unless we change it around some." Such a statement doesn't provide a terribly clear plan, but the wise project member will recognize the clue and pursue the point, hunting for validation and details from others. Often it turns out that some decision-making norm or organizational policy of which people are only partially aware underlies the uneasiness. To ignore or violate the circumstances of the agency is to ensure that the project will not succeed.

One large agency discovered that a cross-unit work group which had been assigned a school-community project had difficulty focusing on the needs of the local site amidst all its other responsibilities and interests. After this experience, members of the group advocated that in the future, similar projects might fare better if there was clear accountability on the part of <u>one</u> agency unit to support the project.

In another smaller agency, however, the organization noted that keeping the School-Community Process in the domain of just one unit prevented other interested staff members from actively participating. Ultimately, those left out became critical of the project.

It is the uniqueness of each situation which best determines the course of action.

Representative Participation

A fourth principle associated with project continuation is that of representative participation. When people from all participating organizations are aware and involved, project continuation is more likely. One vital reason for this is that wide representation enhances communications more than any planned "P.R." program. Each has contributions to make to the program which can greatly enhance its success and its continuing relevance. If a project is perceived as one which is widely accepted, and is congruent with other priorities, it has high probability of being continued.

In one site, the temporary school-community group was keenly aware of division in their community between Indian and Anglo members. Many group members were fearful of bringing representatives of different community subgroups together. As the School-Community Process unfolded, however, a wide representation of viewpoints was found in the school-community groups. Conflict resolution processes were introduced when needed and the pilot school-community project was completed, with the following outcomes:

- *A lawsuit initiated by the Indian community against the local school districts <u>before</u> the School-Community Process was begun, was dropped during the School-Community Process.*
- *A needs assessment revealed that Anglos and Indians <u>shared</u> the view that education would be improved in this district by building two new schools for remote Navajo areas.*
- *The communities where school-community groups were active passed bond elections that nonschool-community group areas rejected.*
- *After a tryout of the School-Community Process, three more communities wanted school-community groups, and initiated them by paying for process facilitators out of their own budgets.*

Neutrality

The fifth and final principle is one which makes the others operational. Processes which build ownership and local participation in a project succeed when they are facilitated by a neutral party; a party that is willing to have the outcomes of a project decided by the people who participate in it. Neutral facilitation lacks investment in any one particular outcome. It values equally people who are affiliated and not affiliated with the project, and promotes fair evaluation of all activities, ideas, plans, decisions, and programs. If the project staff has definite ends in mind, and will consider no effort acceptable which does not lead to these ends, ownership will quickly fade, if it ever gets started.

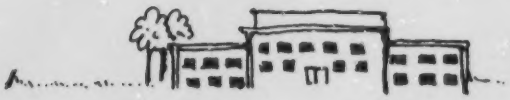
> *One regional agency, while very supportive and very interested in the implementation of the School-Community Process, chose not to compel local districts to participate, but rather shared information with the districts about the potential of the project. The neutral stance adopted by the regional agency allowed each local district autonomy in the decision to participate in the School-Community Process. Communities which elected to participate created active school-community groups. Three communities which initially chose not to participate later requested the service of process facilitators.*

Applying the Principles to Your Situation

School-community project staff members can actualize ownership, orientation and training, recognition of the uniqueness of each situation, representative participation, and neutral facilitation by initiating continuous problem solving on three levels.

On the first level are the activities of the school-community project itself. Here, a project coordinator and process facilitators can assimilate the School-Community Process into their regular work procedures. On this level, project continuation is more likely when:

- emphasis is placed on staff development and training
- staff training focuses on practical work and agency issues, rather than on theoretical concepts
- training is experienced by all project staff who need to share a common language and understand one another's expectations
- many materials that are used for project work are produced, or modified, by the coordinator and/or the facilitators.



On the second level, which addresses agency-wide acceptance of the school-community project, project continuation is promoted when:

- The school-community project is perceived among the agency's central priorities
- Personnel receive orientation so that they understand and participate in project activities
- The project brings a significant change, not add-on practices, to established agency procedures
- The project confers new decision-making and communication skills
- The assumptions and goals implicit in the school-community project are perceived as congruent with those of the agency

On the third level, which addresses agency administrators, four general questions are likely to determine the degree of administrative support for the continuation of the project:

- What "success" during implementation activities can the project display?
- How "central" or important are the educational needs that the school-community project serves?
- What human and material resources are required by the project?
- Does the organizational and political climate inhibit or promote the school-community project?

Generally, if administrators perceive the school-community project as being important and successful, having the support of the staff, and not too expensive, their support of project continuation can be expected.

The Agency's Effect

The preceding discussion foreshadows a major premise of this paper: a project's agency setting has a major influence on its prospects for survival. The Rand study affirms this premise, saying ". . . our statistical analysis as well as our field work clearly showed that project outcomes depended more on the characteristics of the project's setting than on any other factor."[2]

If the organizational climate of the agency enhances the motivation of project participants, the prospects for effective project continuation are significantly increased. In particular, project success is keyed to the

active support of those administrators who appear to be "gatekeepers" of change, and to the degree that superintendent and agency managers feel committed to the values underlying the project. The attitude of these personnel directly influences the project staff's willingness to expand extra effort on their project and, thereby, directly increases the chances of project success.

The attitudes of agency administrators, in effect, tell the staff how seriously they should take the project objectives. Unless the project seems to have agency and unit priority, staff members may not put in the effort and emotional investment necessary for project continuation.

In their study of innovative projects, Berman and McLaughlin noted:

> *Organizational climate and individual commitment are important because significant innovations often require more than the mere installation of a promising educational method, technique, or technology. They usually assume that individuals alter their traditional patterns of behavior. In other words, the institution must adapt to the demands of the change agent project even as the project adapts to its environment.*
>
> *Because the organization must adapt if significant change is to take place, the receptiveness of the institutional setting to the change agent project seemed a necessary condition for successful implementation. Naturally, implementation was difficult in a hostile environment, but indifferent settings also failed to provide necessary support.*[3]

FOOTNOTES

1. Lee Green, "Process Before Program: A Recipe for Community Involvement," Community Education Journal (May/June 1975), pp. 45-46.

2. P. Berman and M. W. McLaughlin, Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Volume IV: The Findings in Review. Prepared for the U. S. Office of Education, HEW. R-1589/4-HEW. 300-75-0402. (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1975), p. 20.

3. Ibid., p. 21.

Evaluation: Questions for Continuous Planning and Assessment

At a superintendents' meeting, one superintendent asked another, "How's that school-community project going in your district? I've been reading a little about it in the newspapers. . .and how you passed your bond election last week."

The other superintendent replied, "Well at first people were pretty skeptical about how the whole thing was going to work. But we got a school-community group formed and it conducted a community survey. Based on the survey information, the school board and the school-community group agreed on a project to remodel the high school building; this was a tough decision because the remodeling job and a new kindergarten were both high priorities among community members. As a result some were not happy with the project and the bond issue was heatedly debated. But, all things considered, I think the activities are going well; the bond was passed and people are certainly more involved in school affairs than they have ever been in the past."

Evaluation is always an important part of operating new as well as ongoing projects. Questions are frequently asked about how things are going and what has happened as a result of the project.

More formally, evaluation activities focus on two purposes. One is to continuously assess progress and make necessary adjustments during the course of project activities. A second purpose is to summarize the results. At selected points in time, information is gathered to describe the outcomes of the project to date and the impact of the outcomes.

In terms of the School-Community Process participants at each level, local, regional, and state, will need certain kinds of information to engage in adaptive planning. Information will also be needed to determine the success of the School-Community Process and assess the worth and feasibility for continuing and expanding the process into other communities in a region or in additional regions of a state.

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A task force made up of state, regional and local agency representatives could assume the responsibility of developing and carrying out evaluation plans for the School-Community Process. The design of an evaluation plan and selection of appropriate tools is the job of this task force and of the evaluation expert.

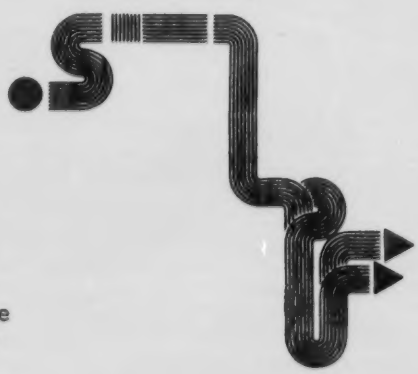
Regardless of the evaluation procedures that are used, there are certain questions that participants will want answered. The following are examples of questions that are likely to be asked as the effectiveness of the School-Community Process is examined.

Citizen Participation

- Has citizen participation changed in the districts that were active in the project?
- Do citizens see their participation as meaningful?
- Is there any indication that involvement will be increased after the first cycle of the project?
- What new skills have citizens demonstrated? How will these skills affect future educational planning?

Process Facilitators

- Were process facilitators important to the work of the project?
- Did the process facilitators receive adequate training for their tasks?
- Will the facilitators use these skills in other projects? How and where?
- Does the regional agency or school district intend to retain the process facilitators (if funds are available)?



School

- How does the school staff perceive the effect of the project?

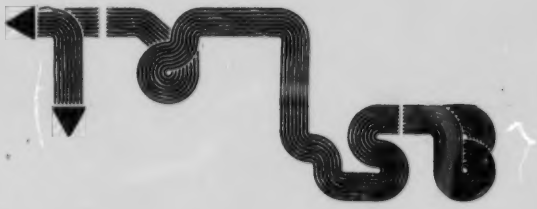
2

- Has participation affected the way the staff handles its own decision-making processes?

- Do school staff members who participated directly on a school-community group wish to do so again? Do they feel that it was a worthwhile experience?

- Do school administrators feel that their effectiveness is increased by this form of school-community participation?

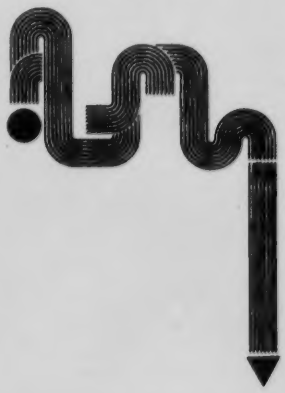
School Board



- How did the school-community group and the school board interact?

- What do members of the school board feel about the impact of the project?

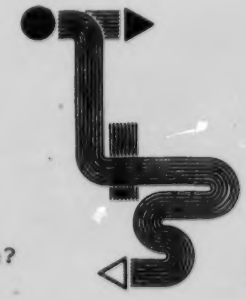
Agencies



- How did participation in the project affect the interactions between the local districts and the regional agency? Between local districts and the state agency? Between the regional and state agencies?

- What effect does the project have on services provided by the regional agency? The state agency?

Training



- What were the strengths and weaknesses of the training plan for process facilitator trainers?

- How do these people intend to use their skills in the future?

- How does the agency intend to make use of trainers' skills?

Another set of questions about the School-Community Process could focus on agency procedures. Agency staff may wish to consider adopting regular services that support school-community problem solving.

- Would these services replace ones currently offered or would they be additional?
- Would new services be coordinated by an existing unit or by a new unit?
- What effect will the new services have on other services offered by the agency?
- What would be the best way to link information generated by local school-community problem solving (e.g., communities prioritizing their educational needs) with the information that state or regional agencies generally use to assess educational priorities?

Information will also be needed about the feasibility of continuing a project.

- Do people at state, regional, and local levels recognize the need for process facilitation and related services?
- Would they consider adopting them permanently at this time? Also, are funds available? Is there some way to reallocate existing funds?
- What is the feasibility of supporting other local school-community efforts in terms of cost, interest, and support?

The basic question underlying any evaluation is, "What have we learned from this project and, based on this information, where are we going?"

Factors of Successful Implementation

Introduction

Recently, in an education agency, a group of administrators and specialists lingered in the hall after their formal meeting and began sharing some ideas about implementing innovative programs.

"The first few months of a new project are crucial," commented one. "During this time all ideas leave the meeting room and get tested for real."

Members of the group responded with their stories about projects that had succeeded--and some that had not.

Finally, a seasoned administrator said, "You know, in my younger days I thought that planning was the most critical feature. If a project faltered, I'd fault the planning. Now, I think there's more to it. Effective projects need at least as much investment in implementation as in planning."

To many educators the process of implementation is a matter of organizing people and resources in order to carry out plans. Good program results are expected to occur somewhat automatically, if preceded by good program designs. However, several research studies[1] have concluded that effective implementation means more than carrying out the original plans.

In these studies, investigators addressed independent problems and used different concepts to explain their findings, but their conclusions and recommendations are strikingly similar. Each study identified critical factors that influence successful implementation of innovative projects, such as the School-Community Process.

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Making Innovations Work

One primary factor of successful programs is that they are based on a need felt by local people. Studies of the National Diffusion Network's activities indicate that "successful adoptions cannot occur unless the local school first recognizes that something is lacking in its school and defines its need."[2] Similarly, Berman and McLaughlin found that program success was characterized by a "problem-solving" orientation in the local school system. That is, the local system had identified and already begun to attack the problem before outside money became available. By contrast, failures in implementation were associated with an "opportunistic" orientation where districts simply supplemented their budgets with money that happened to be available. Other characteristics of successful implementations include the following:

- Project designs were not "prepackaged" but were adapted by local people to fit their unique situations.
- Rather than adopting materials which were developed elsewhere, materials were adapted or developed to fit local needs.
- Continuous planning and re-planning went on--not just a burst of planning at the outset.
- Training emerged from the ongoing needs of the project and the participants, rather than being delivered in one shot at the beginning.

- Technical assistance was assured continuously, in contrast to one or two-day visits from busy "experts."

- Strong support was given by key administrators at district and school levels.

According to Berman and McLaughlin, "Data from the survey and field work clearly indicate that the implementation strategies selected to carry out a project vitally influence the innovative process and project outcomes."[3]

They also point to another factor that was equally important for successful projects. "Contrary to the assumption underlying many change strategies, implementation did not involve merely the automatic application of a technology. Implementation was an organizational process that implied interactions between the project and its setting; thus, it was neither automatic nor certain."[4] Berman and McLaughlin call this process mutual adaptation.

Mutual Adaptation Creates Solutions

Mutual adaptation is a process of mutual interaction and influence where all parties make adjustments to support their common purpose. The field experiences of the Rural Education Program, together with the findings of implementation studies, lead us to believe that mutual adaptation promotes successful implementation of new educational approaches.

For example, in implementing the School-Community Process, mutual adaptation means the focus of activity in an agency must not be overpowered by choices made for the activities in another agency or in a participating community. Likewise, the design of the project may need to be adapted to the capacities of the agency. If either focus begins to dominate the other, communication and collaboration can break down and project outcomes can be impaired.

Mutual adaptation can involve a variety of adjustments. For example, project designs can be modified to fit the actual conditions of a site.

In one Rural Education Program site, the project design originally called for the stages of the School-Community Process to be implemented over a 12 to 18-month period. However, because the small Indian community could only pay for three months of facilitation, the project design was modified so that the first four stages of the School-Community Process were completed during April, May, and June of the school year.

The following year, even though process facilitation had ceased, the school-community group initiated a bicultural curriculum for Indian children, created a school library, and began a kindergarten program.

Mutual adaptation can also bring interim changes in the standard practices that agency administrators use to support their staff.

In a local project site the district superintendent recommended that formal faculty meeting time be used for school faculty to become more involved in activities that supported the School-Community Process. He also had the teaching staff released from classroom duties, with pay, and hired teacher substitutes so that the school staff could visit other schools during their "search for alternatives"--one stage of the School-Community Process.

In another site, the superintendent of the state education agency recommended that monies from the inservice education funds be used to pay for credit hours that were granted to the state education agency staff members who were learning to become process facilitator trainers.

To achieve mutual adaptation, administrators on local, regional, and state levels may work together to influence decisions that previously rested in one agency.

In one state a school-community project was drawing near conclusion. The state agency task force, which was responsible for monitoring the project, created a project evaluation design. The local process facilitators were concerned that the presence of evaluators interviewing local community members might be misinterpreted as a part of the local SCG activities. A conference involving decision makers from the state and regional agencies and the local school district was held to discuss the issue. As a result, a description of the evaluation process and a carefully designed interview schedule was published in the local community newspaper. Rather than disrupting SCG activities, the evaluation process created additional publicity and seemed to arouse further support for the School-Community Process.

These adjustments are sometimes difficult and require careful attention. Although they do not guarantee success, they do increase the likelihood that project outcomes will be closer to desired goals. In the history of the School-Community Process, efforts invested in mutual adaptation have created results that surprised the participants and exceeded their expectations. As the day-to-day needs emerged, each project employed its own combination of choices about such issues as those just described. As a result, the implementation of the School-Community Process occurred in different ways, depending on the unique circumstances in each locale.

Building Mutual Adaptation

The main factor which promotes mutual adaptation is <u>continuous problem solving</u>, which works to keep the project design flexible, adaptive, and congruent with agency and field settings.

By continuous problem solving we mean:

- problem solving that systematically enables people to share their ideas, identify major concerns, search for alternative solutions, decide what they will do, implement their decisions, and assess the outcomes
- problem solving that establishes communication among local, regional, and state participants
- problem solving that occurs regularly to address concerns and make adjustments as needed
- problem solving that is based on data about what did and did not work well and that adjusts project activities accordingly

Continuous problem solving is a way to identify issues and determine solutions before problems become crises. Meetings that involve representatives of all participants can provide a forum for continuous problem solving. Here participants can monitor project achievements and modify practices according to field and agency needs.

Continuous problem solving must consider (a) the services that are delivered to a local site and (b) the capacity of agency staff to deliver and support these services. Three questions which usually arise are:

1. Is training keyed to project operations and trainee concerns?
2. Are users adapting materials and other resources to their specific needs?
3. Does the project involve a sufficient number of participants to build project morale and to represent a wide assortment of community, school, and agency concerns?

Continuous problem solving will answer these questions in a practical and effective manner.

Is Training Keyed to Project Operations?

Training is more effective if the trainer continuously considers the needs of trainees and project operations and addresses these needs in the training sessions. This premise was verified by the Rand study which found that, "Training was significantly related to project outcomes only when it was tied to the specifics of project operation and to the practical day-to-day problems of the project participants."[5]

The following training issues are pertinent to the School-Community Process:

- Initially, process facilitators need a thorough orientation to the School-Community Process. Once they begin their field work, trainers will need to give concrete "how-to-do-it" workshops which specifically address the daily operations in a site.

- Project coordinators need experience both in facilitation methods and in the local setting. This expertise enables coordinators to give specific suggestions when assisting and managing process facilitators.

- Process facilitator trainers need to recognize that any unfamiliarity with the local setting and local issues will impair their effectiveness in keying training to operations.

- The operations of the project will probably indicate that training is needed for people other than process facilitators. Agency specialists and field consultants may need training to relate effectively to school-community groups. Agency administrative teams may need training to effectively build collaboration between groups and agencies.

Many issues are likely to arise about the relationship between training and project operations. A useful rule of thumb is "when in doubt, keep training practical and immediate."

The training of process facilitators involves the use of both formal training sessions and guided field experience. In one site, the trainers flew into the site periodically to conduct guided field experience. During the initial stages of the School-Community Process, when so many people were assuming new roles, the occasional visits by trainers were inadequate to meet the process facilitators' needs.

In response, the Rural Education Program sent a staff member to live onsite for eight months and give continuous guided field experiences to the process facilitators. This enabled the facilitators to develop more secure relationships within the site and to proceed more comfortably with their work.

In another site the process facilitators felt that the regional project coordinator was familiar with the technical aspects of monitoring education projects, but was unfamiliar with the local scene. After hearing their concerns, the regional coordinator participated more actively in the formal process facilitator training sessions and gradually focused more attention on the day-to-day details of the site.

When considering the concerns of trainees, the following issues may arise:

- Some trainees, such as process facilitators, may prefer to have their training practical, addressed to the immediate school-community issues and processes, and arranged at regular intervals over an extended time.

- Other trainees, such as agency specialists and field consultants who are invited to work with an SCG, may be interested in less intensive training. They may want a general orientation to the School-Community Process, a description of a school-community group's role and functions, and some practice in consulting techniques which specifically address SCG processes.

- Still other trainees, such as agency administrative groups or task force groups, may desire an orientation to the School-Community Process, some experience with shared decision making and group communications, and experience in processes that build collaboration between groups.

Training has been effective if trainees

- demonstrate knowledge of tasks to be accomplished and remain task oriented

- demonstrate competence to carry out their own tasks

- use communication skills and behavior which support relationships within a work group

- use processes which build collaboration between groups

When the training format and the trainers offer regular opportunities for trainees to air their concerns and to assess the effectiveness of their training, then the day-to-day implementation activities can be carried out by interested and competent people.

Are Participants Adapting Their Materials and Other Resources to Their Specific Needs?

It is important that participants periodically assess their materials and adapt them to the specifics of their own situation. Adaptation may range from careful assessment and "adjusting" of existing materials to producing supplementary materials from scratch. These adaptations can play an important role in successful project implementation and in project outcomes. As the Rand study noted: "The value of producing one's own materials may not lie principally in the merits of the final product, but in the activity of development itself. The exercise of 'reinventing the wheel' can provide an important opportunity for staff to work through and understand project precepts and to develop a sense of 'ownership' in project methods and goals."[6]

One SCG site included members from a Navajo Reservation who created several materials and techniques which would work effectively in the Navajo culture, which has no written language. Rather than mailing out needs assessment questionnaires, which could be answered by only a few Navajos who could read English, SCG members went from hogan to hogan conducting the interviews in the Navajo language. They also translated the needs assessment survey questions into Navajo and then translated the Navajo answers back into English so that they could send a written report of their findings to their school board.

Another SCG made site visitations to other schools. A special booklet, entitled "Responsibilities of Site Visitors," described the criteria the group had selected to use, the itinerary of their trips, and practical observation and interviewing techniques to use during the visits. These included a notable piece of advice: "Ask questions--keep them talking--listen and listen!"

Project participants are likely to find that locally adapted materials will fit their needs better. As Berman and McLaughlin pointed out, by reworking the materials, the participants are reworking significant precepts of the project, gaining a sense of ownership of them, and implementing them in daily practices. They have an interest in making the project work well.

Does the Project Involve a Sufficient Number of Participants?

If people feel a strong commitment to their new project and their school district considers the project to be important, then it is easy for project participants to feel that all will go well. However, the research indicates that individuals who are nonparticipants in the project can often communicate negative or indifferent attitudes that erode project morale. Sometimes these nonparticipants create pressure for the participants to "give up" when their work hits bumpier times. Berman and McLaughlin described this phenomenon by saying, "Apparently, a 'critical mass' of project participants is necessary to build the support and morale of the project staff. Furthermore, a critical mass of project staff in a given site is able to establish a norm for change in the setting, rather than making project staff seem to be deviant."[7]

Our experience with the School-Community Process has similarly shown that when people from all parts of the local community, the schools, and the supporting regional agency are aware of, and involved in, the School-Community Process, the project is strengthened. One reason seems to be that wide, representative participation enhances communication and enables many people to see that the project can help them do their work better. When they see the project in this light, they begin to invest energy in maintaining it.

In one state education agency, the project staff acknowledged the principle of representation in a big way. They persuaded members of the agency's administrative team to poll their units and collect opinions about a position paper which the project staff prepared. This paper strongly advocated citizen participation in educational decision making. The administrative team members were asked to consider the results of this polling as they made their decision about the position paper. As a result of this procedural change:

- *More agency members learned about the project and the additional recognition from colleagues enhanced the morale of the project staff.*

- *The administrative team recognized that the polling procedure resulted in a better data base for their decision making. A precedent was thus set which resulted in more two-way communication between administrators and staff prior to administrative decision making.*

- *An increase in "ownership" of the citizen participation approach was clearly demonstrated by the administrative team and many agency members.*

- *The state board which governed the agency received the position paper, discussed it, and recommended that citizen participation in educational decision making become the agency's first priority.*

- *A representative task force was appointed to design and implement an agency-wide inservice program regarding citizen participation in educational decision making.*

Putting It All Together

In summary, the experiences of the Rural Education Program in the field, together with the findings of the implementation research, lead us to believe that a successful implementation process is one which utilizes mutual adaptation. This process promotes interaction and mutual influence between the agency, the site, and the project plan. It relies on continuous problem solving to make sure that within a project:

- the training is keyed to operations

- the materials are adapted to local needs

- there are sufficient participants to build project morale

- the participants are representative of the population

Implementation becomes an organizational process that depends vitally upon human interactions. When no one element of the project dominates, communication and collaboration can be developed which help people articulate, and seek ways to satisfy, their educational needs.

FOOTNOTES

1. Three studies that are particularly comprehensive and form the basis of this paper include:

Julia Cheever, S. B. Neill, and J. Quinn, Transferring Success. Prepared for the U. S. Office of Education, HEW. 300-75-0402. (San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Education, Research and Development, 1976)

Michael Fullan and Alan Pomfret, Review of Research on Curriculum Implementation. Prepared for the National Institute of Education, NIE-P-74-0122. (Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1975)

P. Berman and M. W. McLaughlin, Federal Programs Supporting Educational Change, Volume IV: The Findings in Review. Prepared for the U. S. Office of Education, HEW. R-1589/4-HEW. 300-75-0402. (Santa Monica, California: Rand Corporation, 1975)

2. Cheever, Neill, and Quinn, Transferring Success, p. 28.

3. Berman and McLaughlin, Federal Programs, p. 18.

4. Ibid., p. 10.

5. Ibid., p. 9.

6. Ibid., pp. 19-20.

7. Ibid., p. 20.

Sharing Information

The Importance of Sharing Information

In communities that are beginning the School-Community Process, people may encounter the following:

- a school board member who angrily feels that the real intent of process facilitators is to "stir up trouble" among the citizens
- an education specialist who says, "I could have volunteered time to help the school-community group look into alternative curriculum programs if I had only known soon enough that they needed assistance. Now I'm all booked up."
- a process facilitator who wishes that occasionally the superintendent would take time to discuss issues before formal memos were sent out about school-community group activities
- a school-community group chairperson who feels, "If I had known how well the telephone survey worked in Falls Creek, I would have recommended using it in Corning as well; as it was, people just didn't answer the questionnaires that were mailed."

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Each of these examples illustrates a tangled information flow. When project information is not clearly shared, people involved find it difficult to make reasonable decisions, feel confused about project activities, or discover that resources and activities are not well-coordinated.

Community members, process facilitators, educators, students--all participants who affect or are affected by the project--need to know what is happening. When necessary information is shared among all who need it, then decision making, planning, and coordination are more effective. Sharing information increases the likelihood that project activities will be more successful; and a series of successful experiences increases the probability of project growth and continuation.

When developing procedures for sharing information, consider

- the purpose for which the information is needed
- when to share the information
- how to share the information

Purposes of Sharing Information

As the School-Community Process unfolds, several needs for information will emerge. Such needs are likely to fall into the following three categories.

Orientation

When a new project is being considered, all persons affected need to share a common understanding about the nature of the project. People who are to have an active role in the project will need information and answers to questions like:

1. What is the School-Community Process? What are its goals?
2. What might be the benefits of the process to my community?
3. What is the role of a process facilitator?
   - What will the process facilitator be doing?
   - Who will the process facilitator be working with?
   - Who does the process facilitator work for?
   - How can a process facilitator be contacted?
4. How will the agency be involved? School staff and students? The school board? Community members?

It is important not only for agency staff to share what they know about school-community projects--the procedures and what have been the results of such efforts in other communities--but to listen to others' concerns and to find out more about the communities that are interested in participating in a school-community project. If enough accurate information is shared at the beginning, the likelihood of misinformation, false expectations, and anxiety is diminished. Also, agency staff and potential school and community participants are in a better position to determine the probabilities of success for the School-Community Process before engaging in time-consuming activities.

When people in local communities receive new information, it is typical for them to express a variety of reactions. Some will be eager to pursue a new opportunity. Others will spend much energy analyzing various alternatives. Some will express confusion, and still others will voice objections to the proposed changes.

Thorough information sharing will allow for all these responses. As change is considered, people are inclined to communicate strongly about what they want. Through the process of open and clear communication, people become more aware of the issues they face, learn where they stand with each other, and understand how others size up the impending decision. Unless the resulting decisions reflect a broad base of opinion, they will not be supported and carried out. In other words, although one or two individuals in a community and any number of agency staff may argue that a community needs to be involved in the School-Community Process, it will not be successful unless many people in the community agree.

Making Decisions

Decision making is the process of making choices among alternatives. And to make an effective or sound choice, complete information must be available to all who are involved in making the decision.

Using as much information as is available in decision making increases the accuracy with which consequences can be predicted. For example, a school-community group may contact a staff member of an intermediate service district to help them design a community survey. The utility and effectiveness of the methods and instrumentation the consultant suggests will depend largely upon the information available about the purpose of the survey, how many people will be contacted, what the time constraints are, and what resources (money and people) are available.

Two kinds of information are important for making decisions: (1) information related to feelings and perceptions and (2) information related to knowledge and observable events.

Several factors influence personal feelings and perceptions. People's individual logic, their desires to be accepted and included, their views of right and wrong, their sense of personal power, and their immediate feelings about the situation are all part of their decision making. Information sharing must provide continual feedback among participants about these personal factors.

Information about what people know and what they have seen or experienced is an important part of quality decision making. For example, suppose a state agency learns that merely providing financial support for new school-community projects does not ensure effective, lasting projects. The agency can use this information to revise its policies and formulate alternative strategies for initiating and supporting projects that are more likely to succeed.

Since any type of pertinent information withheld during decision making diminishes both the quality of the decision and the commitment to carry it out, tactics for withholding information, such as sandbagging, using hidden agendas, and side-talking, usually result in short-term expediency. When this hidden information finally surfaces, the decision must be faced again--this time in an atmosphere of distrust and conflict.

Involvement and support may wane if decisions do not reflect reality as perceived by project participants. Consequently, those involved in the project are encouraged (1) to base their decisions on pertinent information that has been shared openly and (2) to provide those affected by a decision the opportunity to influence it.

Taking Action

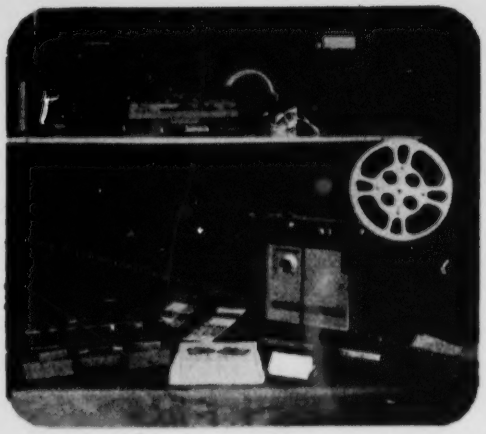
Implementing the School-Community Process is not simply a mechanical process, but a developmental one in which the planned innovation and its setting undergo continuous modification. A continuous flow of information about project successes and failures is needed in order for those involved in the project to adapt and improve project operations.

To identify what modifications need to be made and to select ways to carry them out requires that information be shared openly and frequently. Regular meetings of project personnel and with local educators and citizens is a way to encourage people to share information about problems, new ideas, what things are working well, and what needs more attention.

In the School-Community Process, modifications are likely to center on

TRAINING: Are training activities for process facilitators keyed to project operations and the facilitators' concerns?

MATERIALS: Are agency staff and local participants adapting materials and other resources to their specific needs? Are existing materials being used? What new materials are needed?



PARTICIPANTS: Does the project involve a sufficient number of participants to build project morale and to represent a wide assortment of agency, school, and community concerns?

AGENCY SERVICES: Is the assistance provided by process facilitators and other agency consultants viewed by local participants as useful and beneficial? Does agency staff have the necessary skills to deliver and support these services?

Sharing these kinds of information enables all involved to assess and adjust the direction of the project and to deal with both anticipated and unanticipated problems. Methods that maximize flexible information sharing, such as frequent staff meetings, discussions with local school staff and citizens, and having agency staff readily available, will help you deal with issues as they arise and better equip you to make whatever changes the situation calls for.

When To Share Information

When participants are involved in a decision, they will need information enough in advance to give them time to consider their choices. After a decision has been made, people will want information about the results or outcomes. The sooner people are aware of the results of decisions, the more likely they are to assess the worth of the decisions and learn how their involvement (or lack of it) shaped the decision and the results. If information is tardy--coming too late to shape decisions effectively or too long after an outcome--participants begin to lose touch with the project.

Timing is also important in another way. People are more likely to use and act upon information if it is available as they consider a decision. Also, if individuals feel pressured to accomplish a task or seem confused by a rapid change, they are less prepared to cope with new information. Presenting information when it is pertinent to the task and when others can acknowledge it will increase the probability of the information being used.

How To Share Information

The way in which information is presented greatly influences whether or not it will be used.

Avoid Creating Threat

New information brings a change to familiar thoughts and viewpoints. People usually respond to change with some level of stress. Therefore, it is important to present information in a nonthreatening way. Avoid interpreting information in a judgmental manner. It works better, for example, to say, "The survey was completed by 40 percent of the community," rather than saying, "You had very poor response to the survey." When information is communicated in clear, "that's what it is" statements, then others are able to make their own judgments about the meaning and significance of the information. As a result, people are less inclined to feel "pushed" or threatened by the information.

Keep Information Relevant

Shared decision making does not mean all decisions are made by all the participants; neither does it mean that all information is shared among all participants. The content of the information needs to be relevant to the person's concerns. For example, a school-community group needs to know how long this project is funded, but they may not need to know all the funding issues facing the support agency. Information "overkill" is a fast way to dampen enthusiasm for a project.

It is also important to consider confidentiality. Information about personal feelings, errors in judgment, private opinions that are aired in the process of group discussions must stay within that group. One incidence of indiscretion which violates the privacy of an individual or a community immediately raises alarm in others. For example, if a school-community group member learns that his private opinion about an agency consultant has become public gossip, trust is quickly lost throughout the project and communication is impaired.

Match Communication Methods to Receiver's Preferences

People like to receive information in different ways. The way information is conveyed often determines how quickly--and thoroughly--people will act on it. Some people prefer receiving information in writing, which enables them to digest the information when it's convenient and retrieve it without a lot of trouble.

Other people prefer more interaction as they receive information. They often enjoy personal contact; they want to question the information source and enjoy giving their spontaneous reactions and feedback. Face-to-face

conversations allow for more clarification than written messages since both persons can pick up on nonverbal communication and check perceptions. Telephone conversations limit opportunities to pick up nonverbal cues, but still give each person time to obtain immediate clarification.

Some people want a combination of approaches: they want something in writing first, with an opportunity to follow up with a conversation. Others prefer to discuss it first and then receive a summary of the conversation in writing.

Questions of legality must also be considered. Some events in the School-Community Process, such as hiring personnel or reporting the outcomes of a school board meeting, must be captured in writing and made available to the public.

Summing It Up

Information sharing goes two ways. Giving and receiving pertinent information enables project participants to

- share expectations and reach a common understanding about the project
- prepare for and make decisions
- adjust project plans to meet perceived needs

How your school-community project operates, why it operates as it does, and the consequences of various activities and decisions of the project are related closely to the openness and timeliness with which information is shared.

Supporting and Guiding Process Facilitators

Most agencies or school districts that hire a process facilitator also designate a staff member to coordinate or supervise the work of the facilitator. Guiding and supporting one or more process facilitators is an important function. For many process facilitators, their role will be a new one. Training coupled with on-the-job guidance from a coordinator or supervisor can do much to help a process facilitator effectively plan, carry out, and assess his/her work with various school and community groups.

The amount of time a staff member devotes to working with a process facilitator varies, depending on the number of process facilitators and their scope of work. For example, a staff member might allocate three days a month to work with a process facilitator who is working half-time with one community. On the other hand, a staff member might allocate ten days per month to work with four full-time process facilitators.

This paper presents information about what a staff member, designated to work with and guide process facilitators, can do to help them solve problems, make decisions, and assist others to take an active part in school problem solving.

Helping Process Facilitators Become Oriented To Their New Role

There are some things a coordinator can do to help a process facilitator become acquainted with his/her surroundings (if a facilitator is new to the agency or community) and the people he/she will be working with.

1. Introduce the process facilitator to agency staff. When a process facilitator first joins the staff, he/she will undoubtedly have questions like, "Who works in this agency?" "What do they do?" and "How will my work relate to what they do?" Agency staff members will have similar questions about the new process facilitator. Providing an opportunity for a process facilitator and agency staff to ask and answer some of these questions sets a climate for sharing information and relieves some of the anxiety that both parties may have.

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2. Introduce the process facilitator to school and community members. Informal meetings can help a process facilitator and local people meet and become acquainted. These meetings offer an opportunity to deal with initial questions and to begin building interpersonal relationships.

3. Help a process facilitator get settled in the community. Sometimes a process facilitator will be new in the community. Providing information about the nitty gritty logistics--housing, utility services, shopping--will be of great assistance to a newcomer.

4. Share expectations about job roles. Just as a process facilitator is taking on a new role, so is the person who will be supervising and coordinating a facilitator's work. It is important for both parties to spend some time sharing their expectations about anticipated tasks, how they want to work together and any questions or concerns either might have. Not only does this help to clarify and define their respective roles, but also helps establish a climate of openness and trust between the process facilitator and the coordinator.

Guiding the Process Facilitators' Work

A process facilitator must carry out a variety of tasks in order to teach local citizens and educators how to work together to plan and carry out school improvements. A coordinator can greatly enhance the process facilitator's commitment, and accomplishment of tasks, by planning and monitoring the work with the staff members rather than for them.

One technique is to use a problem-solving procedure. The coordinator can assist a process facilitator to clarify the purpose of each task, determine what needs doing, search for ways to accomplish this plan and carry out the task, and evaluate the results.

For example, perhaps a process facilitator has noted that discussions in a particular group frequently shift from the topic and are lengthy. They also seem to result in indecision. Together, the coordinator and process facilitator can clarify the problem and determine what the process facilitator might do, i.e., suggest to the convener some new behaviors such as setting

time limits for each discussion topic, or periodically summarizing the major ideas and issues of a group discussion. The coordinator can then help the process facilitator assess the results of his/her efforts, noting what went well and what didn't, while continuing to think of other solutions to the problem.

Frequent problem-solving sessions of this nature not only help a process facilitator gain confidence and skill, but also allow both parties to express satisfaction with tasks performed. Problem areas can be discussed, such as skills that aren't being used, and so on.

Another technique, called management by agreement, can be used to help a process facilitator identify problems and assess the degree to which work has been accomplished. This technique incorporates the following concepts:

1. Agreement. The coordinator negotiates long-range and month-by-month written statements of the outcomes each process facilitator is expected to produce. Both parties shape this agreement and share their expectations about outcomes. When both the coordinator and the process facilitator have determined the outcomes of the work, it is likely that both will be strongly committed to a task and its importance. Task accomplishment is then more likely.

   The statement can include the date the work will be finished and the commitment of resources required to get it done. In negotiating these agreements, the coordinator should not borrow strength from his or her authoritative position to get the other person to agree to an untenable work statement. An agreement that focuses on results, rather than methods for accomplishing them, gives the process facilitator both the responsibility and the freedom to exercise his or her ingenuity. People resent work when their commitment is to time schedules and deadlines only and not to the quality and purpose of their work.

2. Provisions for help. The agreement can specify the help the coordinator is committed to providing. An effective team is built through an understanding that the coordinator is willing to help in ways that the process facilitator might request. A coordinator must be careful to assist rather than do another's job. Otherwise, the coordinator risks damage to relationships and morale.

3. Accountability. The coordinator and the person with the work assignment can assess together the fulfillment of the agreement. The process facilitator can carry out a self-appraisal based on the agreement; the coordinator should then feel free to share his or her impressions of how well the agreement was accomplished. The degree to which a coordinator can encourage and guide process facilitators will greatly influence the success of process facilitators and of the groups they work with.

Regularly scheduled monthly work reviews between the coordinator and the process facilitator can be used to assess what has been accomplished and the difficulties that have been encountered, as well as how these can be dealt with. Then another month's work-and-help agreement can be negotiated. The form that follows can be used to facilitate these reviews:

Month October

Task Group Process Facilitators

Tasks Planned	Person(s) Responsible	Days Needed	Planned Completion Date	Tasks Accomplished (Date and Comments)
1. Work with the school board to inform new SCS members about their first meeting--when, where, and the purpose	1. Rachael	3	October 4	1. Letters were sent out to all new SCS members on October 4
2. Meet with Brandon H.S. and elementary school staff to review responsibilities of school representatives to the SCS	2. Rachael	4	October 6 (Brandon H.S.) October 8 (Brandon Elem.)	2. Completed--see field notes for summary of questions staff asked
3. Plan and conduct first school-community group meeting in Brandon on October 14	3. Rachael and Antonio (Coordinator)	5	October 10 (Planning) October 14 (Meeting)	3. Plans were completed by 10/10 Meeting was held but two new members were not present--need help in how to get these two members oriented and included as part of the group

Information that is presented and planned at the beginning of a work period, e.g., at the first of the month

Information that is reported and discussed at the next work review; tasks with which there are some difficulties and that are not completed are transferred to the "Tasks planned" column for the beginning of the new work period

Helping the Process Facilitators Work Together

Another challenge that a coordinator faces when two or more facilitators are employed is that of helping them examine the way they function as a group and creating a climate in which each member feels important and has an opportunity to develop his or her own capabilities. This means periodically asking questions like:

- Do we as a staff cooperate with one another to carry out tasks, solve problems, or make decisions?
- Do we communicate comfortably and openly with one another?
- During staff meetings, are specific procedures followed--e.g., establishing the agenda, allowing time for discussion, recording decisions?

- Are members satisfied with tne way decisions are made?
- Does the staff seem clear about what it is doing and the direction in which it is going?

When process facilitators and the coordinator first come together, they, like any group, go through phases. In simple language, the phases of a group are forming, storming, norming, and performing.

Forming

When a group first meets, people want to feel safe and secure. They want to know what the rules are. "What's going to happen?" They ask questions like, "What am I supposed to do? Who's in charge?" "Am I in the right place? Am I going to be accepted? Who is likely to support me? Who in the group is strong? Who's kind? Who's funny?" Norms for behavior and interaction begin to form. Is the group formal or informal? Do people use first names or last names? Who talks to whom? Where do people sit? Which people cluster? Who's a loner?

Storming

As answers for these questions begin to emerge, the group moves to the next phase, storming. The sense of uncertainty in the forming phase is replaced with determination and confidence. Silently asked questions now spill out into verbal questions. "Who are you (the coordinator) and what are your credentials? What makes you think you know what's best? What's the reason for doing this?" And questions become statements. "I have an idea. I think we should..." At this point formal leadership is challenged and group members begin to experience their own strength. Roles in the group begin to emerge. It's a time of testing leadership credibility. A coordinator or leader must carefully structure give-and-take so the other group members have a sense of moving forward, not simply of a free-for-all. Storming may occur over an extended period of time. Once the issue of power is settled, the group moves into norming.

Norming

Desirable norms that began to emerge as the group was forming now become confirmed. Expected patterns of behavior are clear to everyone and people feel comfort in the norms. When asked, "Why do you meet together once every two weeks?" the process facilitators respond with, "That's the way we keep one another up to date about field activities and meetings." Definite, clear, and consistent norms enable the group to move into performing.

Performing

The group gets down to working on and accomplishing the task. Roles are clear, norms secure, and individuals can work together sharing strengths and accommodating for weaknesses.

Under certain conditions the group may revert to any one or more of the previous phases. A phase change can come if new members are introduced to the group, if dissatisfaction with leadership arises, if a crisis occurs, if an individual's attitude or behavior changes.

A coordinator together with the process facilitators can also do a number of things to build group cohesiveness:

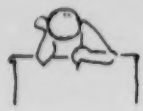
1. Identify with your group. Think of your group as a team rather than a collection of separate individuals. Recognize your common purpose and talk about what we can do rather than what I can do.

2. Build a group tradition. Once a group forms, it begins to create its own history. Groups can refer to events that are memorable and plan for activities that will create tradition. Examples might be monthly planning sessions and occasional social gatherings.

3. Get the group to recognize good work. A group that appreciates the efforts of its members will promote a feeling of acceptance and caring. When good work occurs, compliment the individuals responsible.

4. Set clear, attainable group goals. Each group is likely to have long-range goals. The group also establishes short-term goals. For example, "The goal for this meeting is to make a decision about who will take the lead role in conducting the orientation session at the Grange this Friday." End-of-the-meeting or weekly reports on goals that have been met increase a group's sense of accomplishment.

In cohesive groups, members feel a strong kinship to each other. In a sense, every member is essential to the group. However, if someone is frequently late or absent, the group may feel incomplete and less able to function.



Encouraging New Ideas

Another important function of the coordinator is to provide and stimulate new ideas for improving the ways in which a process facilitator works with community groups and for improving school-community relationships. A process facilitator may look to the coordinator for conceptual leadership in (a) strengthening and modifying the basic approaches to school-community problem solving, (b) improving the ways in which the agency supports local school-community projects, (c) linking to other agencies engaged in supporting local problem solving, and (d) utilizing resources to build strong school-community partnerships.

If a coordinator takes on this function, it is important to be able to establish and support a climate in which a process facilitator can contribute to the design and operation of a school-community project. The following are some techniques that can be used to encourage a facilitator to contribute ideas to the project.

1. Encourage a process facilitator to design and carry out his/her own professional development. The coordinator can facilitate such activities by developing and sharing a sample personal development growth plan, by working to establish a fund for such activities, or by planning for released time during which a facilitator can pursue development activities. The resulting growth can contribute greatly to improving approaches or making adjustments in project direction.

2. Explore with a process facilitator some possible futures for the project. This technique, sometimes called "futuring," is a way to expand the potential of a project by examining all the possible things it could be. For example, the coordinator might ask the process facilitator to "imagine the school-community groups as they might be a year from now." What does the facilitator see happening? How does he or she feel about this projected situation? What role does the facilitator envision for him or herself? This technique frequently produces a wealth of ideas, some of which can be translated into new goals or directions for school-community problem solving.

3. Solicit and listen to a process facilitator's ideas. It is important for individuals to be able to share their ideas and to feel that those ideas are valued and respected. Individuals want to have an active part, and are a tremendously valuable resource, in shaping the project. Creating an atmosphere in which people can communicate their ideas without immediate judgment or criticism does a lot to promote creative approaches to project goals and operations.

4. Assist a process facilitator to design and carry out project improvements. For example, perhaps a process facilitator wants to explore an idea for helping a school-community group work more collaboratively with school staff. Support for such an effort might be provided in terms of money to purchase a few books or released time to attend a workshop on intergroup collaboration.

These are only a few examples of the ways in which a coordinator can build the kind of environment where a process facilitator will feel his/her ideas are welcomed and respected.

Summary

The work of a process facilitator is very demanding. In the early stages of a school-community project, it can be confusing and frustrating, particularly if the process facilitator is new to the role. For this reason, an individual who provides process facilitators with leadership, guidance, and moral support greatly enhances the success of their work with school and community groups.

The approaches presented in this paper are only suggestions and must be adapted to meet individual needs and preferences.

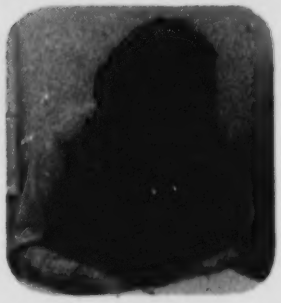
Selecting a Process Facilitator

The role of a process facilitator is both challenging and demanding. Process facilitators are trained to help citizens and educators grow in their capacity to systematically solve local educational problems by collaborating effectively with other individuals and groups. The process facilitator works closely with school-community groups, school staff and administrators, and school boards.

The following information is intended to help agency staff members identify potential candidates and select a person they feel is most suitable for the job.

What a Process Facilitator Does

A process facilitator works with all participants in the School-Community Process. A major part of a process facilitator's job is to help group members learn and use systematic problem-solving skills. This includes identifying problems, searching for alternatives, developing implementation and evaluation plans, carrying out the plans, and assessing the results of the effort.



For example, during an early stage of the School-Community Process the process facilitator helps local persons plan and conduct a community-wide survey to find out what people feel are critical educational needs, problems, or goals in the community. A process facilitator does not identify the problem or goal areas. Rather, a facilitator teaches the skills needed to successfully plan and conduct a community survey and to report the findings.

A process facilitator also helps groups work together in ways that are productive and satisfying. A process facilitator assists group members to acquire or improve their skills in communicating, making decisions, resolving conflict, and using various resources to assist them in their work.

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For example, if a school-community group has difficulty making group decisions, a process facilitator can help the group identify the problem. It may be lack of information, or that some members don't feel their opinions are seriously considered. The facilitator helps find ways to resolve it--gathering adequate information before a decision is considered; airing facts and opinions from each person; trying out a different decision-making procedure.

Throughout the School-Community Process, the role of the process facilitator evolves. The role evolves from a person who gets things going, to a process trainer who helps people learn to take an active part in decisions and planning, then to a resource person who can supply information and link people up to resources, and finally to a supporter of school and community people who assume the major tasks of facilitation.

Working as a Process Facilitation Team

While it may not always be possible, the work of a process facilitator is usually more effective if carried out by a team rather than an individual. It is healthier for a team to work with groups of people since team members can share skills, give each other feedback, and spark each other's creativity. Generally, a team will be most effective if it represents:

- more than one of the local ethnic groups
- each language that is spoken--if more than one language is spoken in the local area
- both sexes--since community groups usually include both men and women
- local/non-local residency

A strong team benefits from the advantages of differentiated skills, common planning sessions, flexible leadership, and a sense of interdependence. And, if a team works smoothly together, people will notice and may begin to imitate such behavior.

Suggested Criteria for Process Facilitators

The choice of an individual to fulfill the role of a process facilitator requires careful consideration. Before job announcements are distributed,

criteria should be developed for assessing applicants' skills and experiences. Criteria can focus on the following areas:

- previous work experience
- educational background
- personal attributes

Previous Work Experience

Since the major functions of a process facilitator are focused on working with groups, previous work experience with groups would be important. Specific characteristics that should be considered include:

- the candidate enjoys working with groups
- the candidate has worked successfully with groups to improve task accomplishment or group processes
- the candidate has worked with school or community groups
- the candidate feels it's important for groups to learn to function effectively without the continued assistance of a process facilitator
- the candidate can work with groups in a way that promotes shared decision making

Previous work experience with groups can be quite varied. Experience in working with school or district staff can be beneficial--to have some familiarity with how schools operate--but is not absolutely essential. Generally, what is important is that a person values, and has the skills to create, an atmosphere where people can be open and can trust and learn from one another.

A person's previous experience in managing his or her own workload, or coordinating the activities of other groups, is beneficial. A process facilitator frequently works with several groups simultaneously, and needs to be able to coordinate planning and preparation tasks with meetings and activities of other groups with minimum supervision.

Another thing to consider is previous experience working with a wide variety of people. School-community group members represent all factions and opinions in a community. The process facilitator will need to work with persons with varied backgrounds and work in such a way that all groups feel equally included in the activities.

In short, no specific experience guarantees that a person will be a good process facilitator, but some kinds of experience are especially valuable when considering someone for the job. A basic background would include working with people in an educational or training situation, coordinating a variety of activities, and/or working with multicultural or diversified groups.

Educational Background

Just as there are no set rules for previous work experience, there is no absolute prescription for the appropriate educational background of a process facilitator. While many persons currently working as process facilitators have a bachelor's degree in education or in some area of the social sciences, such previous training is not absolutely necessary. For example, occasionally individuals with a lot of formal education do not succeed as a process facilitator. On the other hand, individuals with only a high school diploma have sometimes done quite well.

During the Rural Education Program training, a process facilitator learns concepts and gains skills in the following areas:

- group processes and small group theory
- helping school and community groups develop skills
- problem solving
- conflict identification and resolution
- collaboration among diverse groups
- decision making
- team building

Prior skill in any one or more of these areas would be beneficial. More important than formal degrees and training, however, is attitude. It is crucial that a process facilitator be interested in learning the concepts and skills mentioned above, and--perhaps most important--value others learning these concepts and skills.

Personal Attributes

In addition to work experiences and educational background, there are certain attitudes that affect how a person works with others and, ultimately, his or her success as a process facilitator.

COMMITTED--to the principles and assumptions that underly the School-Community Process--see Attachment A.

NEUTRAL--the process facilitator remains focused on process--how the group solves its problems--and does not become an advocate for any particular group's issues or concerns.

TOLERANT--of ambiguity. When a variety of people looks at local school problems in new ways, there are bound to be surprises and frustrations. A process facilitator must be able to accept and live with uncertainty.

FLEXIBLE--to work outside a consistent nine-to-five schedule. School-community group meetings are usually held in the evening, and occasionally work may take place on weekends.

ENERGETIC--bringing forth the potential of a community to identify and carry out school changes demands a lot of energy. Good health and enthusiasm are important.

SUPPORTS--and encourages people to learn new skills, try out new behaviors, and consider new solutions to school problems.

RESPECTS--local beliefs and customs even though they may not be part of the process facilitator's own system of beliefs.

Where To Look for Candidates

There may already be someone on staff who is qualified to work as a facilitator. Someone who is already known in the school district or community can be a great asset, providing that this person is viewed as neutral and can view educational issues in a relatively impartial manner.

If you are looking outside your immediate staff, consider contacting social service agencies in your county or state. The job of a process facilitator resembles many social service activities and the personnel offices of these agencies may know of people with the appropriate qualifications. Also, regional educational laboratories and centers often have personnel skilled in working with groups and are another type of agency to contact for potential candidates.

Advertising in newspapers and professional education journals should not be overlooked.

When preparing a job description, consider the sample that is with this paper, Attachment B; it is one that was used by a regional agency. Once the job announcements have been distributed, allow at least a month for applications to be submitted.

Screening and Interviewing Candidates

Frequently an agency appoints a committee that screens written applications and interviews the selected candidates. The committee may include agency staff, as well as representatives of the local communities and districts involved in the project. If a process facilitator will be working with a district that has a large minority population, it is important to have representatives of this group on the screening committee.

If your agency is hiring a team of process facilitators, group interviews will let the candidates and the committee members sense who might work well together. An alternative to formal group interviews would be an informal meeting--a coffee hour or a luncheon--among all candidates and committee members.

A Process Facilitator's Salary

Because the role of a process facilitator is new to many agencies, an inevitable question is, "How much do we pay?" This is a difficult question to answer because there are so many variables, i.e., the agency's salary scale; the experience and background of the candidate; the demands of the job; and whether or not the agency wants a part-time or full-time facilitator.

Perhaps an example or two will provide some guidelines for what type of salary would be appropriate.

> EXAMPLE 1: A half-time process facilitator is needed to work with one small community--population of the community is 750. A person with some college background and three years of experience as a leader in various community groups is hired. Salary might range from $4,000 to $5,500 for a half-time person.

> EXAMPLE 2: A full-time process facilitator is needed to work with three small communities--populations of these communities are 700, 525, and 300. A person with a college degree and five years of experience teaching group process techniques is hired. The annual salary might range from $10,000 to $15,000 for a full-time facilitator.

A process facilitator's salary depends on the individual's background and experience, the scope of work, and the employing agency's salary scale.

Summary

The role of a process facilitator is challenging and demanding. It is a job that demands long hours, frequent evening and weekend work and considerable traveling. It can also be very rewarding to see people get involved and together solve school problems. Carefully defined selection criteria, a thorough search for qualified candidates, and a representative screening committee increase the probability that process facilitators will be suitable for the job and can work effectively with local communities.

ATTACHMENT A

PRINCIPLES AND ASSUMPTIONS OF THE
SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS

PRINCIPLES

Shared Decision Making - People affected by a decision should help make that decision.

Choice - The "best" solution is not the same for every school and community. Solutions need to match the values and resources of each area. To make a choice implies awareness of alternatives.

Process - The manner in which a problem is solved or a goal met is often more important than the end product. A systematic process for making choices and changes makes the best use of local resources.

ASSUMPTIONS

- All individuals have the right to participate in decisions that affect them.
- Shared decision making results in decisions that accurately reflect the opinions and knowledge of the entire group.
- Change is ongoing; planned change is more desirable than unplanned change to improve educational opportunities.
- Communication between school and community members increases support for school programs.
- Developing communication and problem-solving skills builds self-reliance and increases the chances that educational improvements will be successful.
- Every individual has worth and dignity.
- Conflict is a natural and common part of change and can be dealt with and used constructively.
- A process facilitator--a person trained to help groups use a systematic problem-solving process--is helpful to persons involved in change.

ATTACHMENT B

SAMPLE

POSITION OPENING

TITLE: Process Facilitator

APPLICATION DEADLINE: February 12, 19XX

LOCATION: Bramden, Oregon

WORK YEAR: Ten Months

SALARY: $12,000

JOB DESCRIPTION: General Statement of Duties and Responsibilities

The process facilitator role represents a relatively new service for an intermediate education district to provide to local school districts. This person is an assistant to schools and communities in processes related to group effectiveness. He/she provides technical assistance to local school-community groups as they form and work through a systematic process to improve the learning opportunities in their school-community.

The process facilitator works closely with community members, students, staffs, school boards, and school district superintendents, assists them to enhance their skills in communication, systematic problem solving and shared decision making, and provides support for the new role requirements which arise because of such work. Work with school-community groups requires frequent late afternoon, evening and weekend work.

MAJOR DUTIES:

1. Plan activities for assisting school-community groups to form; to carry out needs assessment, search, planning, implementation and evaluation work; and to learn the skills required for such work.

2. Assist school-community groups to develop plans for school improvements which incorporate appropriate solutions to educational needs within their community, and do this work in such a way that eventually the group is able to function effectively in the absence of the facilitator.

3. Receive regular training, both formal and field-based, in communication skills, systematic planning and problem solving, group processes, and other skills and knowledge related to the School-Community Process.

4. Function as a catalyst for group action, rather than a doer. Adopt the attitude of never doing for the group anything that it can do for itself.

5. Cooperate and communicate on a regular basis with local school officials, and conduct all activities in such a way as to enhance rather than detract from normal school functioning. Promote effective working relationships between all groups involved.

6. Assist groups to (a) recognize the needs for external resources, (b) develop the capability to select and utilize such resources, and (c) assist in obtaining such resources by acting as a linker when necessary.

7. Attend all (at first--later most) school-community group meetings.

8. Attend significant other community and school meetings; seek to become familiar with community members' opinions and needs.

9. Widen horizon of the school-community groups. Work to assist them to discover possibilities, alternatives, options.

10. Function at all times to work toward the agreed-upon goals of the local school-community people, rather than personal ideas of what would be desirable.

11. Document project activities and submit reports to ESD Superintendent as directed.

QUALIFICATIONS:

Candidate must have demonstrated ability to:

1. Accomplish needs assessments

2. Develop and write plans for activities

3. Collect and preserve data for evaluation of activities

4. Write reports and maintain required log of activities

5. Attend, and participate in, community functions

6. Communicate effectively (listen, speak, write)

EDUCATION:

Bachelor degree (minimum); Major in Psychology, Social Psychology, Sociology (Social Science), Education, or some other related discipline

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Send letter of application and resume' to: Mr. Raymond Taylor, Superintendent
Intermediate Education District
Bramden, Oregon 97XXX

An Approach To Planning School-Community Services

The Context of Planning

Good ideas--creative, worthy notions about the way things might be--are plentiful. A school-community partnership for improving education, for example, is one powerful idea that is now being discussed or investigated by people in your community, region, or state. Planning and implementation are the two activities that translate ideas into reality, and they are generally viewed as both discrete and sequential. Given the present failure rate of innovations introduced in schools, however, this translation via planning and implementation seems chancy at best.

Why? Why do "best-laid plans . . . go astray"? Why do so many new practices die out within six months of their inception or slowly resume the characteristics of previous practices? How can an agency that is planning to provide school-community services have some assurance that its investment of human and financial resources will make a difference, will benefit the agency and its constituents, will pay off?

Fortunately, several recent studies targeted on the development, dissemination, planning, and implementation of successful projects have yielded rather consistent, albeit partial, clues for planners and implementers. The research of Berman and McLaughlin,[1] Hall and Alford,[2] Pomfret and Fullan,[3] and Miles[4] have all stressed:

- the close, nearly inextricable bond between planning and implementation that calls for a planning-action-feedback-planning cycle of continuous problem solving
- the importance of acknowledging, and tying planning/implementation activities to, the socio-politico-economic reality where change will take place

This paper addresses the preliminary planning process that occurs after interest in an idea has been generated but before resources for implementation have been approved. It identifies key elements of planning, describes timing and methodology, and provides a sample outline of what to include in a written plan for school-community services. It is directed to persons who

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are charged with the responsibility of planning by their agency or policy board and is intended to provide a new perspective on planning activities. Although it contains information that may be used independently in a variety of ways, it is designed to accompany the services of a school-community consultant. Another booklet entitled Factors of Successful Implementation discusses the adaptive planning and the implementation cycle that takes place after implementation resources have been allocated.

Key Elements of Planning

Deciding what's important is the key to most activities, and this includes planning. The sorting of means from ends and peripheral from central factors helps narrow the field of possibilities, focuses attention on an important few, and often suggests a pattern for designing the activity.

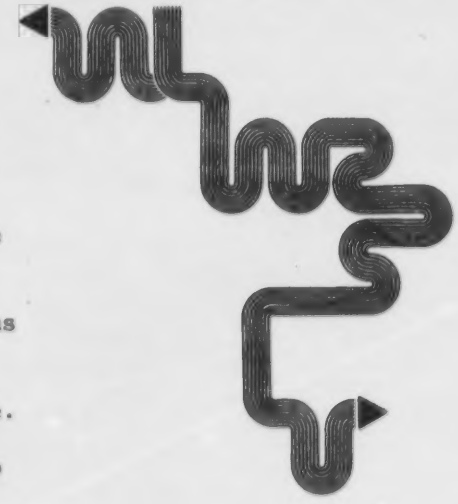
Experience so far suggests that successful planning for school-community services has three touchstones:

- a shared vision of what the future can be
- a design based on the vision, which includes adequate preparation for startup and a procedure for continuous problem solving
- commitment and support necessary to actualize the vision

Each of these is discussed briefly in the following paragraphs and in more detail in the section "How To Plan", and each is referenced in the sample outline as a way to describe the results of planning efforts.

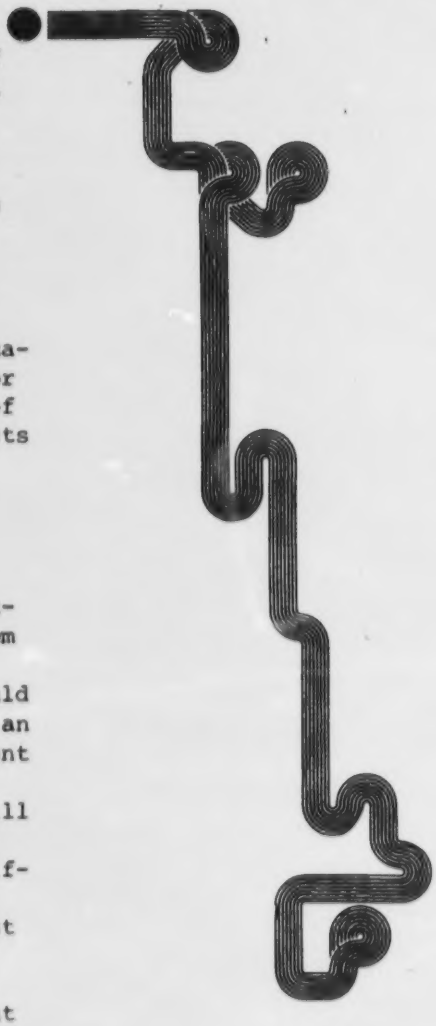
The Element of Vision

Since the School-Community Process is about change--introducing it, managing it, learning from it--a first consideration is "Change to what?" Vision has to do with a sense of purpose about the educational system and its role in society now and in the future. It also concerns the potential of various programs, facilities, organizational patterns and materials for fulfilling different parts of that purpose and role. For example, is it one of the central purposes of your group or agency to help regions and communities make their own decisions about school programs? Part I of the sample outline illustrates one treatment of this consideration in a written plan.



The Element of Design

A second consideration is that of design for change: What features will lead to the goals we have, and what preparation is necessary for startup? These questions can clarify both the actual school-community services to be provided and the methods or manner by which education agencies will provide them. Both the services and their delivery systems require certain resources, staff capabilities, organizational capabilities, and procedures for continuous problem solving. Part II of the sample outline addresses the aspects of design.



The Element of Commitment

Finally, the importance of commitment from participants and support from those affected by, but not directly involved in, the planning process should be considered. One would expect that an innovation imposed without active client support and adequate maintenance resources will dissatisfy users and will fail, and research findings bear this out. Commitment may be the most significant element in planning school-community services for, in the broadest sense, such services are intended to increase the potential and actual influence each of us has on issues that impel us to action. If no one cares, this promise is lost. Part III of the sample outline deals with the issue of commitment.

When To Plan...

Effective planning for school-community services has some of the same prerequisites as effective planning for other purposes--a shared sense of purpose, sound data to use in designing the services, and people and other

resources to accomplish the work. For planning school-community services, this means that:

- State or regional educational priorities include assisting local districts to become more effective at independent problem solving through broad-based community participation.
- A preliminary investigation of the School-Community Process and its outcomes in other sites has yielded generally positive results.
- Planning a pilot project or other installation of the School-Community Process has been authorized by a legitimate body.

If some version of each of these three conditions does not yet exist in your state or region, talk with the school-community consultant. Better a short delay than an unconvincing plan.

...And When To Implement

The studies cited earlier strongly suggest that overplan is overkill. Plan enough to start activities smoothly, they conclude, but not so much that adaptations cannot occur freely during implementation. For school-community services, in order for planning to give way to implementation:

- Preliminary design should be complete.
- Linkages to implementation must be established.
- Processes for feedback and continuous problem solving need to be defined.
- Resources and support for implementation must be available.
- Implementation must be formally authorized.

How To Plan

A host of planning models has evolved over the years. Miles[4] describes six "classic" planning/implementation models--"muddling through," natural development, engineering/architecture, rationalized program development, simulation, and adaptive planning. Pure models are seldom actualized, with the result that almost every planning effort introduces a variation to one planning mode or another. Although personal or agency preference and previous experience will influence the kind of planning you or your group undertake, the case for <u>adaptive planning</u> is strong--a high rate of success.

Miles[4] also suggests that there are at least five underlying dimensions of all planning models--composition of planning group, approach to the future, design specificity, adaptiveness and reflexivity, and planning-implementation linkage. Adaptive planning naturally ranks high among the latter two dimensions and relatively low along the middle two. The primary dangers of adaptive planning are therefore the tendencies toward expediency and laziness--doing what works in the short term rather than what will achieve the goal, or drifting into "unplanning."

Reflecting on prior experience with the School-Community Process and the results of the studies cited, a few guidelines for planning can be postulated:

1. Examine your group and revise its membership until you have a good balance among experts, administrators and staff, those who control the resources, and constituents.

2. Work together to develop a shared sense of purpose and commitment; work individually with those you represent to spread purpose, commitment, and information.

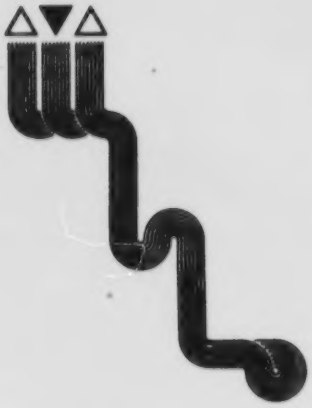
3. Gather data from previous experience and informants along the communication network.

4. Decide on the features of your plan one at a time; leave space in between for action or communication and feedback.

5. Be honest; solicit and use critical feedback as well as compliments.

6. Keep design related to purpose; the spirit behind design features is more significant than the detail of them.

7. Don't ignore issues of power, relationships, and governance because they are stickier than technical issues; they are also more important in the real world.



8. Make sure that implementation will proceed directly from planning--same purpose, commitment level, participants (at least some), features, etc.

9. Include provisions for future problem solving--who, what, how, when, and where.

To round off at a golden number,

10. Don't be lulled into thinking adaptive planning is easy. It requires a high trust level, high tolerance for ambiguity, high energy output, willingness to experiment, and acceptance of high risk from those who would attempt it.

Even so, right now adaptive planning seems to be the best game in town.

What To Include in a Written Plan

A plan that includes all of the features suggested previously might be organized in a dozen ways. The following scheme is merely representative and is intended as a starting point; it does not take into account special planning requirements that are part of every agency's operations.

A complete outline, which begins on the next page, is presented so that the flow of information is coherent, but sections especially pertinent to the implementation of school-community services contain more detail.

SAMPLE OUTLINE

I. THE POTENTIAL OF THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS (THE QUESTION OF VISION)

A. Agency Commitment

1. To effective citizen involvement in education

2. To building the problem-solving capacity of rural districts

B. Summary of School-Community Process Investigation and Results

1. From a needs assessment

a. The assessment of statewide needs for citizen participation and district problem-solving capabilities

b. The extent to which the School-Community Process matches these needs

2. From a feasibility study of school-community services

a. Economic feasibility

b. Political feasibility

3. From school-community projects in other sites

a. The new capabilities of involved local districts and communities to identify and prioritize their concerns about education, then plan, carry out, and assess improvements

b. The new capabilities of the regional and state agencies to provide training, process facilitation, and support services to districts providing school-community services

c. Satisfaction of participants and observers with the School-Community Process

4. From the services of the consulting agency

C. Relationship in Findings in "B" to Priorities in "A"

D. Recommendation for Continuing To Use the School-Community Process in This State or Region

II. PROVIDING SCHOOL-COMMUNITY SERVICES (THE QUESTION OF DESIGN)

A. Mission Statement for School-Community Services

B. Scope of Work

1. Kinds of services to be provided

a. Facilitation of third-party problem-solving groups

b. Training for process facilitators

c. Orientation for consultants who work with local districts engaged in a school-community project

d. Coordination/information sharing/assessment/planning

2. Extent of services to be provided

a. Number of local and regional sites involved initially

b. Rate of expansion

c. Number of process facilitators and trainers needed

3. Extent of support required within the agency

a. Financial

b. Organizational

C. Management Plan

1. Organization pattern to accommodate a school-community project

a. Possible assignment of responsibility for school-community services

(1) To a new unit

(2) To an existing unit

(3) To an interdepartmental work group

b. Changes required in current organization pattern, if any

2. Staffing pattern needed to accomplish the scope of work

a. Staff needed and number

(1) Project coordinators

(2) Trainers

(3) Process facilitators

b. Staff development needs of the group

c. Staff development activities--kind, number, scheduling

3. Continuous problem-solving processes

a. Who will be involved

b. What kinds of data will be collected, how often, and with what kind of devices

c. How will data be used and decisions made

4. Arrangements with a consulting agency

a. For training

b. For materials

c. For other consulting

D. Resource Plan

1. Funding sources

2. Distribution of funds within the budget

3. Contract with the consulting agency

III. BUILDING SUPPORT FOR THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS (THE QUESTION OF COMMITMENT)

A. The Importance of a Supportive Climate for Achieving Goals and Obtaining Long-Lasting Results

1. Within the agency

2. Among the public

3. In other groups and agencies

B. Existing Evidence of Commitment

1. Planning group

2. Agency support

3. Information network

C. Maintaining Commitment and Support During Implementation

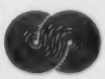
1. Who, what, when, where, how

2. The process of continuous problem solving

What Next?

To be implemented successfully, the project will need a continuing planning process. This can be created during frequent and regular staff meetings that involve many project participants. These meetings provide an opportunity for reassessing plans and their outcomes, for monitoring project achievements and problems, and for modifying practices in light of implementation realities. Continuous planning keeps the project grounded in the day-to-day practices so that issues can be identified and solutions determined before problems become crises.

Continuous planning that involves many project people with their multiple opinions can seem like a lot of complex work. However, as one school district superintendent invited, after disclosing that his district had managed to involve 2,500 citizens in planning its annual budget, "Jump right in. The water's fine!"



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Building A School-Community Partnership: What Happened in San Juan County

Resolving educational issues in rural areas is a tough job. Rural communities are often isolated and have limited resources. Their school districts serve small populations that are frequently scattered over a large area. In many rural settings, children have fewer educational opportunities than their urban counterparts.

Local citizens know that problems created by distance, population sparcity and scarce resources can place the small school at a disadvantage. And, although they are willing to support their schools to the limit of their ability, many small communities are in trouble because their educators and citizens lack a systematic process for working together to identify and meet local educational needs.

The situation in Utah's San Juan School District is only one example.

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NORTHWEST REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL LABORATORY

In the southeastern corner of Utah, a cluster of small communities is served by the San Juan School District. It is an area about the size of New Jersey. The district's population is about half Anglo and half Native American Navajo.

Many students traveled excessive distances to attend the district's nearest high school in Blanding. Other students stayed away from school, lived away from home during the week, or attended boarding schools.

For several years, people living in remote areas of the district had asked that one or more secondary schools be built closer to home.

In the fall of 1974, the unresolved problem became a crisis. The San Juan School District was faced with a lawsuit that alleged racial discrimination.

School District Sued

A class action lawsuit has been filed, by Navajo Indian students and their parents and the Red Mesa and Oljato Chapters of the Navajo Tribe, against the San Juan School District. The suit was served Monday on the San Juan School Board at their regular meeting, and also on the San Juan County Commission, named as co-defendants in the suit.

The lengthy and detailed suit, in its introductory section, charges the defendants "have pursued a longstanding pattern of deep-rooted racial discrimination which results in unequal educational opportunities for Native American children attending the San Juan public schools."

Among other things, the suit alleges discrimination resulting from failure to apportion funds on an equal basis, failure to provide high schools and other facilities in predominantly Navajo areas of the county (resulting in illegal busing) and failure to provide bicultural and bilingual educational programs.

Among the remedies sought are construction of elementary and secondary schools in areas where Navajos reside (to eliminate the busing), as well as "equal allocation" of school funds and other educational resources.

District Superintendent Kenneth Maughan expressed hope that the suit would not result in over-emotional reactions in either the Indian or Anglo communities.

"We have many fine programs underway," Superintendent Maughan said, "and some of them are regarded in the educational community as models for situations of this nature."

Superintendent Maughan said L. Robert Anderson of Monticello and Brigham E. Roberts of Salt Lake City have been retained to represent the District. A meeting has been scheduled for November 22 in Price to include the State Superintendent, the Utah Attorney General, and the District's attorneys so that a reply can be filed within 20 days. The Utah State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction are also named as defendants.

The plaintiffs are represented by attorneys with DNA, the Navajo legal services program in Mexican Hat, Utah, and the Native American Rights Fund in Boulder, Colorado.

The San Juan Record
November 14, 1974

At that time, the Utah State Board of Education had already begun discussions about involving the public in educational decision making. The Board recognized the right of citizens, school patrons, special interest groups, and minorities to have more adequate participation in school affairs.

A member of the Utah State Board of Education knew about the work at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory to develop approaches for small communities to include citizens in educational change. The Board contacted the Laboratory and a contract was negotiated, calling for the application of a comprehensive strategy to achieve the following goals:

- to improve the ability of communities to resolve local educational problems
- to transfer the initiative for educational change to local people
- to improve agency services for schools in rural areas

At the state level, pursuit of these goals began with plans to assist San Juan by providing training for process facilitators. The role of these process facilitators would be (1) to help the community form a problem-solving group that was representative of various citizen and educator groups and (2) to help local citizens and educators work collaboratively.

At the local level, the San Juan School District received financial assistance from the state education agency, the Utah Navajo Development Council and the Navajo Nation and consultation from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory. Part of the money was used to hire four process facilitators.

"Upon the recommendation of Dr. Everett and a committee that interviewed 12 candidates, the Board appointed Robert Angle, Jim Dandy, Clyde Benally, and Jan Christiansen as process facilitators. These individuals will receive specialized training from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory from Portland, Oregon in methods and procedures for community involvement. The process facilitators will be assigned to communities in the southern end of the District to work with the citizens in identifying the school needs, and to also work through the community in submitting recommendations to the San Juan Board of Education."

The San Juan Record
September 19, 1974

Throughout the country, school board members are elected to carry out the wishes of the people when making decisions about policies and procedures for schools. But this task is complicated when various community factions offer divergent opinions.

A significant feature of the Laboratory's strategy at the local level is the school-community group (SCG). This group consists of citizens, school staff members, and students who represent various, and often disparate, community interests. The members of the school-community group learn systematic problem-solving and communication processes. With the assistance of process facilitators, they mediate public and professional interest, filter community feelings, negotiate between alienated segments of the community, and develop recommendations that assist the school board to solve school problems.

In San Juan, the first activity of the school-community groups was to conduct a community-wide survey of school needs and, on the results, recommend an "action" project to the board.

School Talk

By Kenneth Maughan
Supt., San Juan School Distr.

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Members of the School Community Groups met with the Board and Administrative Staff at 1p.m. There are two groups, one working in the Montezuma Creek-Aneth area, and the other in the Monument Valley, Oljato, Navajo Mountain and Mexican Hat area. The members of these groups represent the various communities in these areas and were approved by the Board of Education.

For the past several months they have been involving the students, parents, and citizens of the various communities in an effort to identify and assess some of the school needs.

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The Community School groups have completed a survey which indicates that the parents and students in these area expressed a desire for a high school and expressed their intent to attend such schools if they were to be constructed. With all this information available and upon further assessment, the school Community Groups recommended that two high schools be built in these areas.

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The Board acknowledges and accepts their recommendations that the planning for the construction of the secondary facilities in the Montezuma Creek and Monument Valley areas commence immediately. The Board solicits the continued assistance of the School Community Groups and authorizes them to proceed with the next step in the School Community process.

The San Juan Record
March 20, 1974

The results of the community survey indicated a need for additional schools near the more remote communities of the district. In March 1975,, the school-community groups took their request to build two new high schools to the San Juan District School Board. The board accepted their recommendation and authorized the SCGs to begin planning for the new schools.

The first planning activity was to determine the criteria that would be used to plan the new schools. School-community group members traveled to schools outside the district to gather information on instructional programs, equipment, scheduling patterns, and physical features and floor plans of school buildings.

Once the criteria for the features of the new high schools were established, the school-community groups were ready to prepare plans for the buildings. However, in order to complete the plans and begin construction, the district needed money from the taxpayers. Once the bond election was announced, opinions and feelings about the project became more intense.

Letters to the editor

Friends, countrymen, Romans:

Arise, men of sound judgment, awaken. The San Juan School District is about to capitulate to coercion to bond the taxpayers of the County for seven million dollars! If the bonds are paid off in 20 years, and if they bear seven percent interest, the interest will cost the taxpayers of San Juan $490,000 a year, or $9,800,000 interest over the next 20 years. With the face value of the bonds of seven million, plus the interest of 9.8 million, it will cost the taxpayers 16.8 million additional tax dollars to finance this asinine spending adventure, for the buildings alone, to appease a public nuisance and a small group of non-taxpaying fellow travelers. The operation is estimated to cost $1 million dollars a year.

Join me in whatever legal action is necessary to stop us from being enslaved with this monstrous debt, or you may not have bread on the table or a pair of shoes to walk downtown in.

D. L. Gibbons, M. D.

The San Juan Record
September 4, 1975

Letters to the editor

Dear Miles:

The issue of the School District settlement of litigation and their resulting decision to build high schools in the Montezuma Creek and Monument Valley areas of San Juan County is apparently controversial. In such a situation the public should be aware of all the facts before each individual takes a final position.

In a letter last week there was a call to oppose building these schools based on the writers position that it was too costly and was to appease a minority non-taxpaying group. The cost figures given were seven million capital outlay with an assumption of bonding for the entire amount and paying seven percent interest on the full amount for a 20-year period. If the entire amount was borrowed and amortized in 20 years the interest cost figure was overstated by at least double. It is unlikely that the entire amount will have to be borrowed. Both of these facts would change the stated costs by a great amount.

If the reference to non-taxpayers was to the Navajo people, the record should be set straight in this matter. It is true that the land on the Navajo Reservation, as such, is not subject to property tax.

● ● ● It is also true that homes/hogans and livestock on the reservation are not subject to property tax.

● ● ● All other taxes they do pay, which are: income taxes, (yes, many have jobs) sales, gasoline, and vehicle personal property taxes and license fees. The most significant property tax producer in San Juan County is derived from the production of oil and gas. Most of the production of these products come from Navajo Reservation lands. The property tax from production of oil and gas will provide 62% of all property tax revenue for the School District and the County in 1975 and it has probably averaged near that level since before 1960.

The total tax base (valuation) for the County for 1965 is 69 million dollars consisting of: oil and gas, 43 million; mining, 10 million; utilities, 8 million. The remaining 8 million is the combination of all the farms, homes, businesses, buildings, industrial and farm machinery, personal property, etc. in the entire County.

The facts show that it is not we home, farm, building, etc. owner-taxpayers that will be paying for these new schools, just as it is not our "class" that has and is paying for schools, hospitals, libraries, recreation facilities, roads, airports, travel promotion, weed and rodent programs, etc. that we have in any part of the County. The costs are really paid for (about 88%) by the production of natural resources and utilities, a very large part of which comes from the lands of what some apparently consider "non-taxpayers".

Perhaps even more important than the foregoing is the fact that, based on the 1970 census, there were as many people living within a 20 mile radius of Montezuma Creek as live within the city limits of both Monticello and Blanding! Now, in fairness and equality, if we in these two incorporated communities and vicinity believe our population, number of children, tax contributions, etc. entitle us to schools and other amenities for ourselves and our children, then shouldn't similar conditions in other parts of the County warrant the same consideration? How long would we in Blanding and Monticello have been willing to see our children bused from our communities from 40 to 80 miles each way to remote schools?

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I urge open public dialogue and objective consideration of all points of view and all the facts in this issue, and hope in this process there will be shed a lot of light with a minimum of emotional heat.

Very truly yours,
/S/ Calvin Black

The debate resulted with the majority saying "yes".

61% say "yes" on bonds

Party tickets carried the council elections in both Blanding and Monticello, as more than half the registered voters turned out. And the school bond issue passed by 61% of the vote county-wide.

Francis Lyman, Dave Guymon and Michael Hurst won council seats in Blanding; in Monticello Keith Redd, Bruce Adams and Pat Howell were the victors. Although these were party-line slates in both towns, the tally indicated substantial ticket-splitting by voters.

Francis Lyman led Blanding vote-getters with 448, Dave Guymon had 346, and Mike Hurst collected 300 votes.

In Monticello, Keith Redd received 414 votes, Bruce Adams 302 and Pat Howell 225. Howell's total was 22 higher than Bruce Bunker, closest of the contenders from the other party.

The bond issue passed by 1341 to 848, with voter turnout running very high in some precincts, generally those close to the proposed site of the new secondary schools to be financed by the issue. They are intended to serve the Montezuma Creek-Aneth-Red Mesa area, and the Monument Valley-Oljato-Mexican Hat area. The issue was approved by overwhelming margins in those areas, lost in Monticello 381-173, and passed in Blanding 323-303. North Blanding precinct voted 170-142 against, and South Blanding reported 181-133 for the issue.

Total ballots cast in Blanding were 708; in Monticello the total was 539. This represents just over half the registered voters, in both communities.

Here's the precinct tally on the bond issue:

1. Bluff: 142 yes; 33 no. 2. Montezuma Creek: 174 yes; 12 no. 3. Aneth: 482 yes; 21 no. 4. Cedar Point: 1 yes; 19 no. 5. Ucolo: 15 yes; 30 no. 6. LaSal: 9 yes; 19 no. 7. Spanish Valley: 9 yes; 8 no. 8 and 9 Monticello: 173 yes; 381 no. 10. North Blanding: 142 yes; 170 no. 11. South Blanding: 181 yes; 133 no. 12. Mexican Hat: 138 yes; 6 no. 13. Oljato: 165 yes; 8 no. 14. Navajo Mountain: 107 yes; 1 no. 15. Halls Crossing: 3 yes; 7 no.

Totals were 1341 yes; 848 no.

The San Juan Record
November 6, 1975

The outcome of the vote at places where school-community groups were active was more positive than most other areas where no school-community groups existed. However, the Montezuma Creek, Aneth, Red Mesa, Monument Valley, Oljato and Mexican Hat communities are close to the proposed sites of the new schools.

Results of the San Juan Election	Vote For	Vote Against
Areas with active school-community groups:		
Mexican Hat	138	6
Oljato	165	8
Navajo Mountain	107	1
Montezuma Creek	174	12
Aneth	82	21
Subtotal	666 (93%)	48 (7%)
Areas where no school-community group has been organized:		
Monticello	173	381
Blanding	323	303
Halls Crossing	3	7
Bluff	142	33
Cedar Point	1	19
Ucolo	15	30
LaSal	9	19
Spanish Valley	9	8
Subtotal	675 (46%)	800 (54%)
Total	1,341 (61%)	848 (39%)

The bond election was indeed a major milestone for the people in San Juan County. With the passage of the bond, planning . . .

Board talks new schools, bonds

By Kenneth Maughan
Supt. San Juan School Distr.

The San Juan Board of Education held its monthly meeting

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Architect Jon Taft and the School Community Group from the Monument Valley-Oljato-Mexican Hat area met with the Board and presented their recommendation concerning a site for the high school. The School Community Group presented a report on the final search for alternatives. The Board accepted the report and thanked the group for their fine support and cooperation. Architect Taft was directed to make an in-depth study of water required to operate a high school, housing units, and football field and other related outside watering. He indicated he could have this report ready for a special meeting that will be held on February 20.

Architect Harman and members from the School Community Group from the Montezuma Creek area presented the preliminary plans for the high school at Montezuma Creek. Tully Lameman indicated that the group had recommended the following four names for the high school: Whitehorse High School, Montezuma Creek High School, Four Corners High School, Riverview High School. After a great deal of discussion the Board thanked Lameman and the group for their interest and support in the project. The Board suggested that the four names be taken back to the School Community Group for further discussion, with the possibility of soliciting student involvement. Lameman also discussed the possibility of locating the proposed swimming pool on some land adjacent to the high school. The Board was receptive to this idea and suggested that more information should be available before making a final decision. ● ● ●

The San Juan Record
February 19, 1976

. . . and construction became the major activities.

PARTICIPANTS AT RECENT MONTEZUMA CREEK groundbreaking hold modern and traditional Navajo "shovels". From left to right, Harry Jones, Aneth Chapter president; Dr. Walter D. Talbot, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Robert Billie, member of the San Juan School District board of education, and Harold Lyman, president of the board of education. Photo by Stan Byrd.

Ground breaking at new school

A large crowd of area residents attended the recent ground breaking ceremony of the new Whitehorse High School at Montezuma Creek.

The actual ground breaking ceremony was preceded by speeches of local and state officials.

Clyde Benally acted as master of ceremonies and interpreter during the program.

Dr. Walter D. Talbot, state Superintendent of Public Instruction, the keynote speaker, lauded the efforts of local residents in helping establish a high school in Montezuma Creek.

Dr. Talbot indicated that the community should also be active in other phases of the education program such as curriculum development and community advisory programs.

Other speakers at the June 26 ground breaking included Harold Lyman, president of the San Juan School District board of education, and Robert Billie, also a member of the board of education.

Edward Tapaha, secretary of the Red Mesa Chapter, announced the winner of the "Name the School" contest.

Helen Whitehorse was the winner of the $35 first prize award for selecting the best name.

The Whitehorse High School was named in honor of Whitehorse, a long time resident of Montezuma Creek.

The ground breaking was completed with the use of shovels and greasewood sticks, the traditional Navajo "shovel".

The conclusion of the official program was followed by a traditional Navajo dinner that was well attended.

The San Juan Record
July 15, 1976

In San Juan, citizens and educators have been fruitfully brought together to solve an educational issue. Over the past two years, the people in San Juan have:

1. completed a district-wide needs assessment that indicated a need for two new high schools in the more remote areas of the district

2. passed a 7 million dollar bond to finance the construction of the new schools

3. designed and begun construction on one of the new high schools; the new school is being built on the Navajo Reservation

4. produced an All-Schools Newsletter that is written and published by one of the school-community groups

Existing school-community groups continue to work on the new high schools. New school-community groups are examining other local issues.

School Community group to be formed

Announcement of formation of a School Community Group for Monticello was made at the regular monthly meeting of the San Juan board of education on Monday of this week.

Mrs. Sonja Redd told the board that Miss Jan Christensen met with a group of residents of Monticello, LaSal and Eastland on October 5 to make recommendations for members of the School Community Group.

The group at the October 5 meeting recommended several persons whom Miss Christensen said she felt represented all segments of the various communities. Subject to their acceptance, these prospective members are:

Kent Adair, Telesfora Chacon, Maxine Deeter, Donna Giles, Gwen Halls, Merz Hugentobler, Sandra Johnson, Steve Kosanke, Tyron Lewis, Keith Redd, Sonja Redd, Jim Shannon, Arita Sparks, Cheri Sweeney, Margie Teeter, Wilson Trujillo and Mike Young.

Faculty members will be elected from the faculties, and students will also be selected to serve on the committee. The purpose of the committee will be to provide an opportunity for community involvement in an effort to improve the Monticello schools.

The San Juan Record
October 14, 1976

Citizens and Educators Working Together: Where Do You Stand?

Where do you stand on public involvement in school decision making? How can educational agencies support citizen participation?

This questionnaire can be used individually and/or as a basis for group discussions about the approach the Rural Education Program offers.

Certain responses support the principles and concepts of the School-Community Process and related agency support (see the last page). If you, and others in your agency, select a majority of these responses, the approach may suit your agency well.

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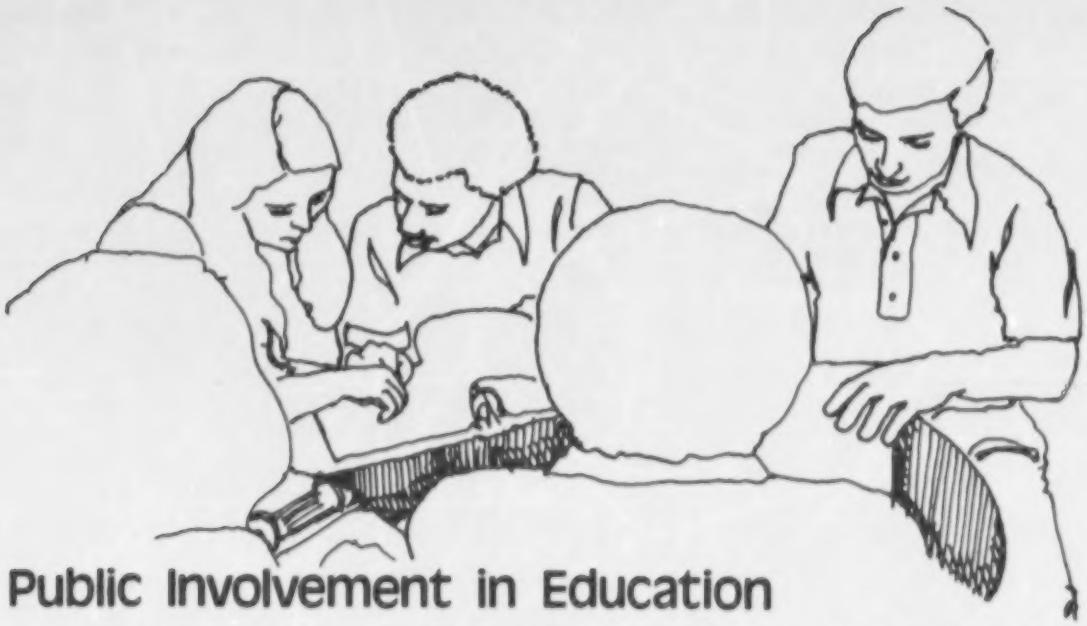
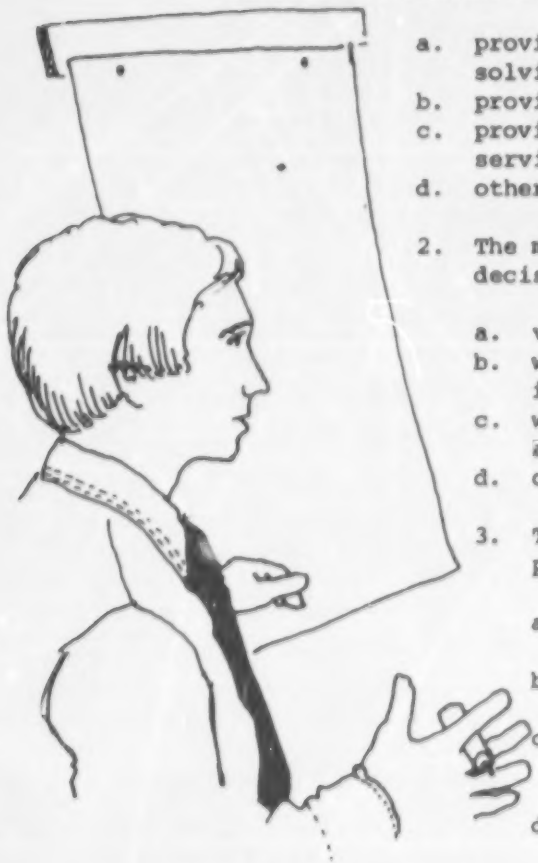


Public Involvement in Education

The following items pertain to the role of citizens in making school decisions. Each item has four choices; the last choice enables you to indicate a personal response if the others do not seem appropriate. Circle the choice that most nearly matches your ideas and feelings.

1. The best way to improve problem solving and decision making in most schools and communities is to:



   a. provide people with the means to develop problem-solving skills and opportunities to influence decisions
   b. provide people access to educational experts
   c. provide people more financial resources and educational services
   d. other (please specify)_____

2. The most effective way for the public to help make decisions about schools is by:

   a. voting on proposed school budgets and programs
   b. working directly with the board and educators to identify and resolve educational issues
   c. working directly with the school administrators and teachers to plan educational programs
   d. other (please specify)_____

3. The best way to establish a local advisory or problem-solving group is to:

   a. have the school board appoint members known to support existing school programs
   b. have the superintendent appoint members who are influential in community affairs
   c. have the school board appoint members who represent all interest groups from the school and community
   d. other (please specify)_____

4. Two-way communication between school and community members usually:

   a. increases support for and commitment to school programs
   b. is time consuming and produces few long-lasting results
   c. creates more information than can be handled
   d. other (please specify)_____

5. The type of consultation that most frequently helps groups to work effectively is:

   a. expert advice
   b. diagnosis of problems and prescription of solutions
   c. development of the group's problem-solving skills
   d. other (please specify)_____

6. Decisions about local school programs and policies should most often be based on:

   a. the expertise and knowledge of professional educators
   b. the needs and wants of the majority of local citizens and educators
   c. the directions and priorities of state and national programs
   d. other (please specify)_____

The Agency's Role

The following items pertain to ways in which education agencies might support public involvement in school decision making. Each item has four choices. Circle the choice that most nearly matches your ideas and feelings.

7. State and intermediate education agencies can best fulfill their service roles when:

   a. they offer a wide selection of services
   b. they have a competent staff that is active in the field
   c. they periodically review and modify services to meet current needs
   d. other (please specify)_____

8. Education agency programs are most useful when:

   a. they are developed collaboratively by agency staff and clients
   b. they are developed by knowledgeable and experienced professionals
   c. they are well established and have been in operation for some time
   d. other (please specify)_____

9. The best way for state and intermediate education agencies to encourage citizen participation in local communities is to:

   a. allocate funds to support a statewide citizen participation program
   b. request all communities to develop a citizen participation plan
   c. provide technical assistance and financial support for developing plans tailored to local needs
   d. other (please specify)_____

10. Consultants who work with local problem-solving groups are most effective when they:

   a. almost always recommend outcomes or decisions
   b. almost always remain neutral on issues and focus on group processes
   c. almost always help groups understand the board's position
   d. other (please specify)_____

11. One of the most effective ways for an intermediate education agency to help local districts improve citizen participation in problem-solving activities is to:

   a. provide information about citizen participation plans that have been adopted by other districts
   b. provide consultants who help groups learn skills and procedures for identifying and solving school problems
   c. offer administrators a series of workshops on citizen participation
   d. other (please specify)_____

12. State and intermediate education agencies can best help communities determine the effectiveness of a citizen participation project by:

a. directly monitoring activities and evaluating the outcomes
b. providing technical assistance for local evaluation
c. developing general guidelines for assessing citizen participation programs
d. other (please specify)_____

Responses characteristic of the School-Community Process:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
a	b	c	a	c	b	c	a	c	b	b	b

Alternative Ways To Organize A School-Community Project

The Rural Education Program offers a comprehensive approach for bringing people and educational agencies together to plan and carry out school improvements. Because each school, community and educational agency is somewhat unique, the approach must be tailored to meet individual site needs and circumstances. The following chart indicates the different ways in which three projects have been organized.

PROJECT ELEMENTS / PROJECTS	PROJECT 1	PROJECT 2	PROJECT 3
NUMBER OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES THAT PARTICIPATED	Four small towns participated; each was a separate school district with its own administrator, school board, and buildings	Five small towns participated; all were part of one large county school district	Five small towns participated; two were separate elementary school districts and three were separate elementary/secondary school districts
NUMBER OF SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GROUPS	Four school-community groups were formed to participate in the first cycle of the School-Community Process	Two school-community groups were formed to participate in the first cycle of the School-Community Process	Five school-community groups were formed to participate in the first cycle of the School-Community Process
PROCESS FACILITATORS--NUMBER AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS	One process facilitator was employed by the intermediate service district	Four process facilitators were employed by the county school district	Three process facilitators were employed by the intermediate service district
ROLE OF A REGIONAL OR INTERMEDIATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY	This agency was an intermediate service district and employed one process facilitator	Regional agencies do not exist in this state; the county school district coordinated the project and employed the process facilitators	This agency: • employed process facilitators • coordinated the process facilitators' work with activities of the agency The project coordinator learned how to train process facilitators
ROLE OF A STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCY	One state department of education assisted in identifying intermediate service districts interested in participating in such a project	Two state department of education staff members were trained and participated as process facilitator trainers Progress on the project was examined by an agency task force	Two staff members were identified, trained and participated as process facilitator trainers One staff member managed the contract in terms of accounting, reporting and sharing information
ROLE OF THE RURAL EDUCATION PROGRAM	• Trained process facilitators • Provided consultation to the intermediate service district • Provided consultation to local administrators and school boards	• Trained process facilitators • Provided a program staff member to live in the district for a few months to assist process facilitators with their field work • Trained process facilitator trainers • Provided consultation to the state department of education and the school district	• Trained process facilitators • Provided guidance to process facilitators during their field work • Provided consultation to the intermediate service district
MATERIALS (Each project used materials that were available and had been prepared by the Rural Education Program)	Manual for School-Community Process Facilitators	Manual for School-Community Process Facilitators Guide and Sample Activities for Training Process Facilitators	Manual for School-Community Process Facilitators Guide and Sample Activities for Training Process Facilitators Guide for School Board Guide for Schools Notebook for School-Community Groups

Estimated Costs for Project Elements

Each community and group of agencies that want to implement a project to increase public involvement in, and support for, school programs have questions about costs. Each project is planned and budgeted on an individual basis with agencies selecting which elements to incorporate, i.e., a specific project may include some or all of the elements displayed below. Along with the array of elements, a general range of costs is presented for each. And depending on the elements that are included in a project, costs can be divided among several agencies. This information is intended to help agency staff plan and budget for specific project elements.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	BUDGET ITEMS	APPROXIMATE COSTS AND BUDGETING ALTERNATIVES
A SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GROUP (SCG) A school-community group usually includes 15 to 20 members who volunteer their time. However, in order to carry out its work, a school-community group may need money from the local school district for a number of items.	• Postage • Telephone--long distance calls • Supplies--paper, dittos, envelopes, etc. • Conducting searches • Travel expenses--members may need to visit other schools or agencies	$200 to $500 per year--donated supplies and members' willingness to absorb personal travel expenses will greatly reduce costs.
A PROCESS FACILITATOR A process facilitator may be employed by a local school district or another educational agency. Resources need to be available to support a facilitator's work.	• Process facilitator's salary • Travel expenses--SCGs may be scattered over a wide geographic area • Secretarial support--one to two days per week for every full-time process facilitator • Office equipment and supplies	A process facilitator: a. could be an existing staff member who agrees to a partial or full reassignment of responsibilities b. could be someone who volunteers his/her time to work with local SCGs.

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PROJECT ELEMENTS	BUDGET ITEMS	APPROXIMATE COSTS AND BUDGETING ALTERNATIVES
		c. could be someone newly hired to take on the responsibilities of the new role Costs will vary depending on the number of process facilitators and whether or not current resources can be shifted or new resources must be acquired. Example 1: An existing staff member serves as a half-time process facilitator. New resources may be needed to cover part of the secretarial support, travel expenses and supplies. Total new resources: $500 to $1500 per fiscal year Example 2: A newly hired half-time process facilitator. A newly hired part-time (6 days per month) secretary. Additional resources may be needed to cover travel and supplies. Total new resources: $6,500 to $11,000
A PROJECT COORDINATOR A person may be selected on a part-time or full-time basis to help process facilitators plan and carry out their work. The coordinator may also act as a liaison between the project and the local district or other educational agency staff.	• A project coordinator's salary • Travel expenses--to attend some of the SCG meetings along with a process facilitator • Secretarial support--one or two days per week for every full-time coordinator • Office equipment and supplies	Costs will vary depending upon the size of the project and whether or not an existing staff member or a new person fills this role. Example 1: A project in one district with two full-time process facilitators--

PROJECT ELEMENTS	BUDGET ITEMS	APPROXIMATE COSTS AND BUDGETING ALTERNATIVES
		• an on-staff coordinator for 3 days per month • an on-staff secretary for 1 day per month • minimal additional resources for travel and office supplies Total new resources: $500 to $1000 per fiscal year Example 2: A project with three process facilitators serving five communities-- • a newly hired half-time coordinator • a newly hired quarter-time secretary • travel expenses for traveling to project communities • office supplies Total new resources: $8,700 to $11,000 per fiscal year

PROJECT ELEMENTS	BUDGET ITEMS	APPROXIMATE COSTS AND BUDGETING ALTERNATIVES
TRAINING PROCESS FACILITATORS (PFs) Individuals selected as process facilitators acquire and apply concepts and skills which help local citizens and educators work more effectively in groups, accomplish tasks, and collaborate with others.	A two-person training team from the Rural Education Program trains process facilitators. Cost of the training includes: • planning training activities • preparing training materials • conducting training sessions • traveling to and from the training site (training is conducted onsite and during the same time that facilitators are actually working in a community) Costs depend on the total number of training sessions	$12,800 to $25,600 plus materials* and travel The agency that employs process facilitators usually bears the cost of PF training.
TRAINING PROCESS FACILITATORS AND TRAINING OTHERS TO TRAIN PROCESS FACILITATORS Individuals selected as process facilitator trainers learn concepts and skills that enable them to design and conduct formal training sessions, as well as supervise a process facilitator's work in a local district.	In addition to PF training, a two-person training team from the Rural Education Program trains people who, in turn, can train process facilitators. Because training trainers occurs in conjunction with training process facilitators, there is overlap in planning activities and preparing materials.	$16,800 to $33,600 plus materials* and travel Costs for both types of training are included in the estimate. A state agency (state department of education, a college) usually bears the cost of training trainers while another agency (local district, intermediate education agency) pays for process facilitator training.

*Cost of materials is six to eight dollars per participant for each training session.

PROJECT ELEMENTS	BUDGET ITEMS	APPROXIMATE COSTS AND BUDGETING ALTERNATIVES
CONSULTATION Any agency that sponsors or participates in a project may request assistance to plan ways they can support the process facilitator's work, serve local problem-solving groups, and/or develop long-range plans to build public support of education.	A member of the Rural Education Program consults directly with agency staff. Costs of consultant services include: • planning for and conducting the session • preparing materials • traveling to and from the agency	$200 to $3,000 (depending on the number of days) plus materials and travel

A consultant from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory can assist agencies plan project budgets and seek additional resources for project elements.

Making School-Community Partnerships Work

Momentum for Change

"The trouble with schools is . . . ." This phrase is being heard more and more, as the public becomes increasingly dissatisfied with the schools in America. Many people feel that schools have become isolated from the very communities that support them. Public officials in cities, counties, and state and national governments are seeking answers to the issue of public involvement in educational decision making. Citizens throughout the country are demanding to be involved, and new laws are reflecting the demand by mandating participation.

This movement is not a fad or aberration, but a major social force with a growing impact on education. The importance of citizen involvement is supported by the principle that those affected by decisions should have access to the decision-making process. Citizens, parents, students, and school staff members are all affected by decisions made concerning education. For them to feel a sense of pride or ownership in these decisions, they need to have some way to influence the decisions. This is what a school-community partnership is all about.

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Building a Partnership

A school-community partnership starts at the local level. Parents, citizens, school personnel, and students from all parts of the community work together to plan for, and carry out, quality education. An approach for making this a reality has been developed and used successfully by many school districts. It is called the School-Community Process.

The School-Community Process has been developed by the Rural Education Program at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and has three important features:

A SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GROUP. This is a representative group of citizens, school staff, and students who work together to identify and solve local educational issues.

A PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCESS. A systematic problem-solving process is used by the school-community group to resolve problems and carry out school improvements.

A NEUTRAL, THIRD-PARTY CONSULTANT. This person is called a process facilitator and helps the school-community group and others learn how to solve problems and work in ways that are effective and satisfying.

The School-Community Group (SCG)

School boards have traditionally made decisions about the policies and procedures of schools. They have served as a balance between factions in the community that hold differing opinions on school matters. Often, however, they do not have ready access to community opinion in any systematic way or, because of limited time, energy, and resources, they are unable to carefully analyze and consider the data they do receive from the community to help guide them in making decisions.

The school-community group provides an important link between the community and the board and offers a means whereby the board can become better equipped to carry out its fundamental responsibilities. Members are selected by the board to represent all of the diverse "opinion groups" in a community. A representative list of opinion groups might look like this:

Parents of school aged children

Representatives of business, industry, service, religious, and cultural organizations

Representatives of ethnic and socioeconomic groups

Representatives of the school--teachers, administrators, non-certified staff, and students

Senior citizens

After opinion groups are identified, the board, working with a process facilitator, can poll these groups to find individual representatives who would be willing and interested to serve on the school-community group.

The Work of the SCG

Once formed, the first task of the group is to conduct a community-wide survey to find out what people feel are the critical educational needs or problems in the community. Data from this survey are examined and reported to the school board. Using this data, the school-community group identifies a priority need and selects one or more goals. Once the goals for an improvement project are agreed upon, a search for alternatives is started. Past projects have focused on improving vocational offerings for high school students, starting a kindergarten, and planning two new school facilities.

Too often in the past, decisions about school improvements have been made quickly, with only a cursory examination of alternatives. The result is often costly to the school district. Therefore, the School-Community Process stresses that an adequate search for alternatives be conducted, and the various options given thorough consideration.

After an appropriate alternative has been selected by the group and approved by the school board, the school-community group begins to prepare implementation and evaluation plans. Although the school-community group is responsible for preparing these plans and presenting them to the board, the school staff, administrators, and school board members are very much involved in developing these plans. It is this task and succeeding tasks--carrying out the plans and assessing the results--that differentiates the work of the school-community group from parent advisory groups that merely make recommendations and have no responsibility for how those recommendations are carried out.

Once plans are developed and approved by the board, the group continues to be involved in the ongoing planning and assessment of a project. For example, if the project is developing a new math curriculum, the group works closely with appropriate school staff to develop a way to monitor the new curriculum to see if it is working out. If changes need to be made, the group helps to work out modifications. Ultimately, the school-community group assesses not only the success of the chosen project, but how the School-Community Process is working for the district.

The SCG and the School Board

The school board plays an important part in the School-Community Process and relates to the SCG in two ways:

1. as the legally responsible body that officially appoints SCG members and confirms decisions and requests made by the SCG

2. as a supporting body that can aid the SCG by sharing information concerning policies or legislation

The school board is the elected body responsible for carrying out the educational wishes of the community. When a community decides to participate in the School-Community Process, this legal responsibility does not change. What changes is the capacity of the school board to effectively represent all of the community.

The SCG can be described as the arms and legs or, perhaps, as the ears of the board. With more people involved in hearing questions about education, in canvassing for concerns, and in searching for solutions, the capacity of the board to make effective decisions multiplies

The relationship between the board and the SCG is reciprocal. The SCG can aid the work of the school board. The board, with its understanding of educational policy, legislation, and available money, can guide the SCG in exploring alternative ways to plan and carry out school improvements. A supportive, reciprocal partnership represents the ideal relationship between the school board and the SCG.

The SCG and the School

Equally important to the success of the School-Community Process is the relationship between the SCG and the school staff. The school staff relates to the SCG in three ways:

1. through school staff and student representatives on the SCG

2. through membership on SCG task forces

3. through active participation in SCG sponsored activities.

The school will have several student and staff members who represent opinion groups in the school. Through these representatives, the school has a vehicle for giving and receiving information. Other staff and students may volunteer or be requested to participate on special task forces.

In addition to having membership on the SCG and on task forces, the school makes its own effort to strengthen its institutional capacity to carry out educational change. To strengthen the school's internal efficiency,

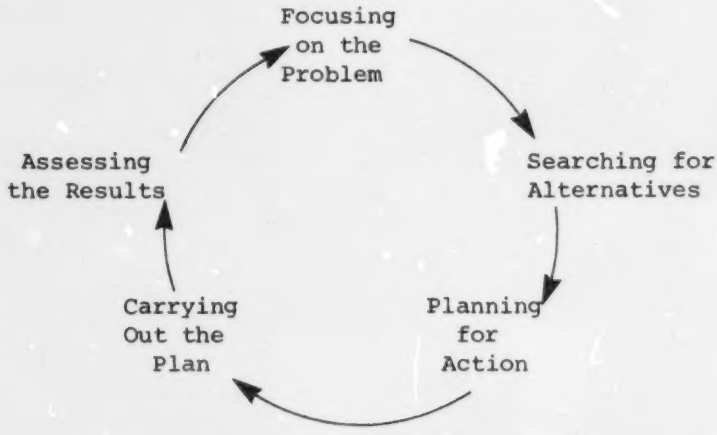
the people in the school (teachers, administrators, students, janitors, cooks, and paraprofessionals) develop awareness and skills in three areas:

1. task accomplishment
2. group processes
3. intergroup relations

Individual tasks, group processes and human relations will be more productive and satisfying, and divergent groups will find it possible and even desirable to work in a collaborative and cooperative way.

A Problem-Solving Process

A systematic problem-solving process is one of the primary tools used in the School-Community Process. The specific steps of the process are:



This five-step, problem-solving process forms the basis of the seven phases of the School-Community Process. The chart on the next page displays the activities by phase and indicates the complementary relationship among the SCG, the school board, and the school staff.

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS

PHASES		ACTIVITIES, BY PHASE		
		COMMUNITY	SCHOOL*	SCHOOL BOARD
PHASE I	AWARENESS	RECOGNIZE THE NEED FOR BROADER BASED PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS AND AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RURAL FUTURES DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY		
PHASE II	GETTING STARTED	NOMINATE OPINION LEADERS TO THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GROUP (SCG)		APPOINTS THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GROUP MEMBERS
PHASE III	FOCUSING ON THE PROBLEM	SCG CONDUCTS A COMMUNITY SURVEY OF PROBLEMS OR NEEDS RELATED TO EDUCATION	CONTRIBUTES TO THE SURVEY EXAMINES THE SCHOOL'S ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY	CONFIRMS THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY GROUP REPORT ON PROBLEMS OR NEEDS
PHASE IV	SEARCHING FOR ALTERNATIVES	GENERATES ALTERNATIVES AND CHOOSES A SOLUTION TO THE IDENTIFIED EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM	PARTICIPATES IN THE SEARCH FOR A SOLUTION CONDUCTS PROBLEM SOLVING TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITIES	REVIEWS AND CONFIRMS RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A SOLUTION
PHASE V	PLANNING FOR ACTION	PLANS FOR IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING THE CHOSEN PROJECT	CONTRIBUTES TO PLANNING READIES THE SCHOOL FOR THE RESULTS OF SCG ACTIVITIES	CONFIRMS PROJECT PLANS
PHASE VI	CARRYING OUT THE PLANS	CARRY OUT IMPLEMENTATION AND EVALUATION OF THE PROJECT		REVIEWS THE PROGRESS OF THE PROJECT
PHASE VII	ASSESSING THE RESULTS	SUMMARIZES THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PROCESS MAKES PLANS TO RECYCLE THE PROBLEM-SOLVING EFFORT TO THE BEGINNING OF PHASE II, III, OR IV	PARTICIPATES IN PREPARING THE REPORT AND PLANNING TO RECYCLE	REVIEWS/CONFIRMS THE EVALUATION REPORTS AIDS IN PLANNING THE EFFORT TO RECYCLE

Total: Approximately 9-21 months.

* (Staff, Students, Administrators)

A Process Facilitator (PF)

One or more process facilitators are employed by a regional education agency (such as an intermediate education agency) or a local school district. A process facilitator not only helps the board form the school-community group, but assists the group with the work of every phase of the Process.

A process facilitator must be skilled in group process methods and be able to impart these skills to members of the community. As members of the community and school gain knowledge and skills, the necessity for leadership from the process facilitator diminishes and the capabilities of local school and community leaders increase.

It is also important that a process facilitator be seen as neutral--not taking sides or advocating any one priority issue or solution. Otherwise the community members will become suspicious of a process facilitator's motive and the facilitator will become ineffective.

The Benefits of a School-Community Partnership

The School-Community Process is based on the premise that when citizens and educators collaborate to identify, plan and carry out school changes, quality education is the result. Such an approach has a number of other benefits at the local level.

1. *School programs and policies are developed that meet actual needs.* A representative group of citizens, school staff, and students works with the school board to identify what changes people want in their schools and how such changes can be accomplished. By learning ways to systematically identify and resolve school problems, local citizens and educators can effectively make improvements important for their schools.

   For example, a very active school-community group in a small Alaskan community:

   a. developed educational goals for the school, including new requirements for high school graduation and a four-part master plan for physical facilities

   b. raised sufficient money to complete Phase 3 of the master plan, costing over 2½ million dollars

   c. added a complete vocational, music, physical education, and cafeteria program, thus greatly increasing curricular opportunities for both elementary and secondary students

   d. has begun an adult education program

2. *Citizen support for schools is increased*. When community members have an opportunity to shape the changes they want in their schools, their commitment and support for school policies and programs is strengthened.

   In a county school district that served several small communities, the need for two new high schools was identified. The efforts of citizens working closely with the school staff and the board resulted in support for building the new schools including approval of a 7 million dollar bond for the facilities by a 63 percent majority.

3. *People develop skills that can be used to meet present and future educational needs*. People in school-community groups, schools, and the school board learn ways to systematically identify and resolve current as well as future school problems. They also learn how to work effectively together.

   For example, concepts and skills that people learn as they conduct the first community-wide needs assessment can be used again to assess local educational needs in the future. Similarly, procedures learned and used by a school board to establish a representative school-community group can be repeated to get new groups started, or to monitor the representativeness of existing school-community groups.

People want to have good school programs for their community. Citizens want to have a way to help shape school programs and policies. The School-Community Process is, and has been, an effective way to bring citizens and educators together to accomplish both.

Building the Case for a Support Network

At an annual convention of a nationally known association of educators a manager in the Rural Education Program learned that the seven other people who all worked together in a large southern city, were attending the convention for the very first time. It seems that they had heard, almost by accident, of the association, and because the association's name sounded very much to them like what they did, they had made plans to attend. The manager became curious about this, as the association was quite well known among educators in general, and he wanted to know why these apparently bright and vibrant practitioners had never heard of it before. Their story was fascinating.

These seven people, most of whom were new to education, had designed and were conducting one of the most exciting school-community change programs he had heard of. Their city was laboring under a court-ordered busing and redistricting program. They had been hired by the city school district to organize and facilitate more than 45 neighborhood associations and other community groups. Their goal was to insure that all opinion groups in the city would have a voice in how the court order would be implemented. They had been at their task for two years and had experienced many setbacks; but they had also gained an amazing amount of expertise. The manager was even further surprised to learn that they had accomplished all this almost in isolation.

For example, a specialist from the state department of education from the same state the seven lived in was also at the convention. Although the specialist's job in the department was to assist and support educators in local districts who had jobs very much like the seven people, the two parties had never met. Further, the local group had never seen a copy of the training manual for educational change agents which their state department had produced. And even though the state department sponsored training sessions on facilitating community groups, the seven had never participated in these sessions and didn't even know that such a program existed.

A Matter of Perspective

If we, as educators in America, have a fatal flaw, it may be that we often fail to take a global perspective toward educational issues and concerns. Too often, we tend to focus our attention on a particular segment of the

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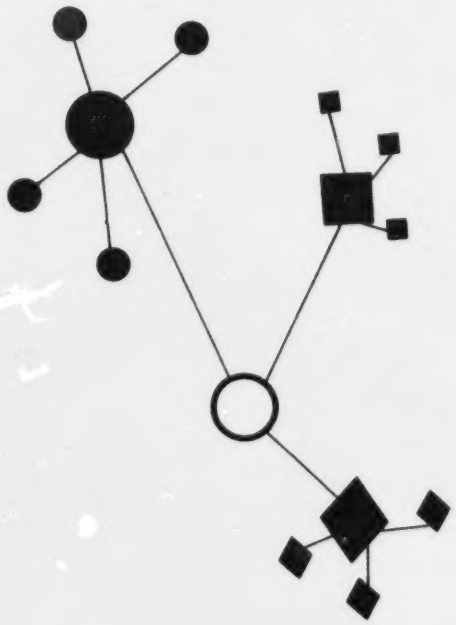
educational enterprise, and thereby fail to see the interrelatedness and interdependence of the other segments. Seldom do we view education as a "macro-system of knowledge production and utilization,"[1] and equally seldom do we understand that we would be able to function more effectively and build a better society if we worked together in a systematic way.

The anecdote at the beginning of this paper dramatizes a situation which can often result from our failure to view the system as a whole. Experienced educators need only to recall the frustrations associated with Title III of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA) to verify and validate this notion. The promise of Title III, to produce marked improvement in the macro-system of education, was never realized. After several exhaustive studies and post-mortems, one recurring reason cited for the failure is that Title III dealt with pieces and did not develop the necessary linkages and networks of support to tie the pieces together. In other words, the pieces did not nurture one another and the macro-system did not benefit from the innovations themselves or from their cross-fertilizations and permutations. The federal government funded the states; the states funded local projects; and the local projects planned, developed and tested their new ideas--and that, essentially, was that! As a result projects often thrived at the local level but had little effect on procedures and practices at the macro level.

This paper addresses the notion of linking and supporting networks and builds a case for applying such networks to projects aimed at strengthening the capacity of citizens and educators to plan and carry out local school changes. In particular, the agencies and the functions they perform that are germane and vital to the operation of the School-Community Process are discussed. The key elements in the discussion will center around two questions:

- Which agencies are included in linking/supporting networks?
- What linkage and support should they provide?



Which Agencies?

During the eight years of developing and field-testing the School-Community Process, the Rural Education Program staff has discovered that linking/supporting agencies can considerably enhance the quality of local school improvement efforts. For purposes of this discussion it may be useful to categorize such agencies into two major types: regional agencies[2] and statewide agencies.

REGIONAL AGENCIES

The regional agencies which can provide linkage and support services to the School-Community Process can also be categorized into two major groups: educational agencies and educationally related agencies.

Regional educational agencies are known by various names in different states or parts of the country. Examples of such agencies include: Intermediate Education Districts (IEDs), Education Service Districts (ESDs), Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), Educational Cooperative Service Units (ECSUs), and Educational Service Regions. Whatever they may be called, regional education agencies generally encompass a broad geographic region and are mandated by law or compact to serve specific and/or general needs of local school districts within their boundaries. The relationships regional education agencies have with state departments of education also vary along a continuum from being virtually autonomous units with no legal ties to a statewide agency, to those which are directly and legally tied to a state agency and have little autonomy.

Although IEDs and ESDs have been the types of regional education agencies that have most frequently participated in the School-Community Process, others, such as community colleges, may take an active part in providing linkage and support.

The regional "educationally related" agencies which have potential to provide support to local school-community change efforts are also known by a number of names. A few which we have worked with over the years are community action agencies, VISTA programs, regional rural development commissions, and other regional or county governmental or service groups.

STATEWIDE AGENCIES

Statewide agencies with considerable potential to provide effective linking and supporting services to local school improvement efforts usually fall into three groups: state departments or state boards of education; universities (those which are not limited to a given geographical region); and statewide associations (those large enough to employ a professional staff, such as a state association of school boards). Again, agencies that fall into the first group have been the type of state-wide agency that have most often been directly involved in the School-Community Process.

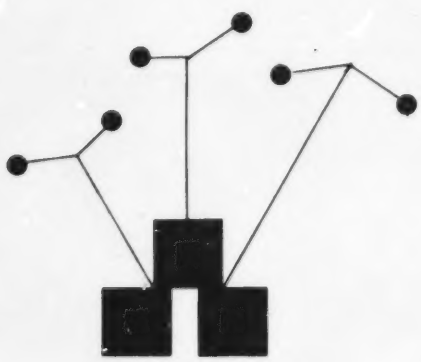
However, the other types of statewide agencies are all candidates for effective statewide linking/supporting agencies for local school-community change efforts.

What Should They Do?

Based on the experiences of people implementing the School-Community Process, there are five types of linking and supporting services which can be provided to local school-community change efforts. It is the experience of Rural Education Program staff that all five functions are necessary to provide an effective support network. Briefly, the five functions and the type of agency for which they are most appropriate are depicted in the following table.

Linking/Supporting Functions	Type of Agency		
	Regional	State	Both
1. Provide an operational base for process facilitators	X		
2. Provide process facilitator training and skill building		X	
3. Improve two-way communications and resource linking			X
4. Promote facilitative policy and legislation		X	
5. Engage in organizational introspection			X

AN OPERATIONAL BASE FOR PROCESS FACILITATORS



One linking/supporting function which is most appropriate in regional agencies is that of providing a base of operations for process facilitators who are working in local districts and communities in the region. By administratively attaching facilitators to a regional support agency, project planners can assist the facilitators in maintaining an objective and neutral stance in their work with local schools and communities. Other assistance which the regional agency can provide to the facilitator team is office space, secretarial assistance, assistance in

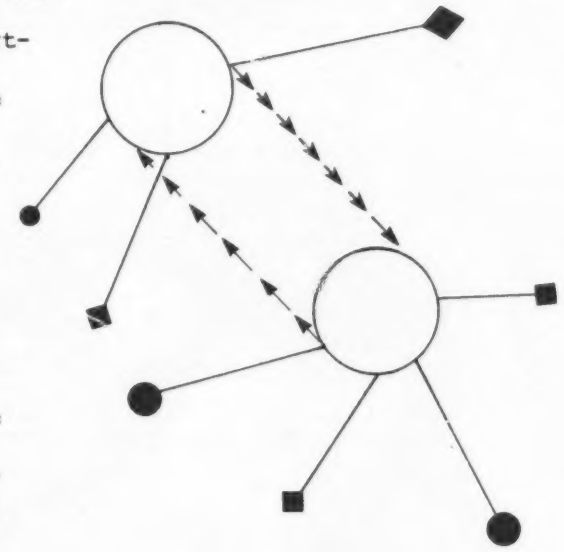
work planning, professional development, team building, and general supervision and coordination.

FACILITATOR TRAINING AND SKILL BUILDING

During the development of the School-Community Process, process facilitator training has occasionally been provided by regional agencies. However, we believe that this function can more successfully be carried out by statewide support agencies. Training for process facilitators in the School-Community Process consists of both formal training sessions and on-the-job, guided field experiences. The training is not "one shot" in nature. It occurs across a nine to twelve month period and at more or less regular intervals of two to three day training sessions about once a month. Because of their greater resource base, larger staff, and generally more versatile and experienced personnel, such a comprehensive and almost continuous training responsibility can be accommodated more effectively by a statewide support agency than by a regional agency.

TWO-WAY COMMUNICATIONS AND RESOURCE LINKING

When an effective linking/supporting system is operating, the flow of communications and resources from the local schools and communities up through the support network, as well as from the supporting agencies down to the local districts, should be vastly improved. As a result of improved communications and resource flow, "wheel-spinning" and "re-inventing the wheel" problems should be reduced and mutual adaptation[3] (a key element in implementing school-community improvements) should become standard practice. Both types of support agencies (regional and statewide) should engage in this function, and if they do, experience indicates their efforts will be well rewarded.



PROMOTE FACILITATIVE POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Statewide agencies are probably better equipped and more experienced in providing this important function in the support network. Often local efforts in school-community change are hampered by inadequate policies and unfavorable legislation. As local districts become better able to articulate their needs and concerns up through the network, statewide support agencies should promote the formulation of policies conducive to local change efforts and lobby for legislation which provides incentives to and removes obstacles from the path of local efforts to effect positive school-community interaction.

ORGANIZATIONAL INTROSPECTION

Any agency can improve its responsiveness and the quality of service to its constituency. The supporting function of engaging in organizational introspection is appropriate for both regional and statewide support agencies. Agencies who wish to facilitate and support local change efforts may address questions such as:

- What services do we now provide? How do they relate to local needs, issues, and concerns?
- Is the way in which we provide services in need of adjustment?
- Are there things we aren't doing now which we should be doing?
- Can we begin new services by reallocating existing resources, or do we need to increase our resource base?
- Is there a difference between being responsive and pro-active? Should we strive to be one or the other, or try to maintain a balance between the two service modes?

The process of arriving at answers to questions similar to those listed above will, in all likelihood, prove most valuable to the support agency itself. But the process also generates many benefits in terms of increased quality and quantity of service to local schools and communities who are engaged in the School-Community Process.

Summary

Piecemeal views of educational change are unproductive. The global perspective of the educational enterprise requires that local efforts, to improve school-community interaction, be facilitated by a supporting/linking network of agencies at both regional and statewide levels. There are five major categories of supporting/linking functions which should be provided by agencies in the support network: an operational base for process facilitators; process facilitator training and skill building; two-way communications and resource linking; policy formulation and facilitative legislation; and organizational introspection.

FOOTNOTES

1. Ronald G. Havelock, Planning for Innovation: Through Dissemination and Utilization of Knowledge. Institute for Social Research. (Ann Arbor, Michigan: The University of Michigan, 1971) p. 3-35.

2. A regional agency refers to an agency located in a designated area within a state.

3. See the paper entitled "Factors of Successful Implementation" for a more complete discussion of mutual adaptation.